

**The Origin, Classification and Evolution of Chinese Paper  
Cutting**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## **Abstract**

The subject dealt with in this thesis relates to the holistic understanding of the development of a traditional folk art: the art of paper cutting. This artistic tradition originated in China and features intricate and hollow style imagery, used to convey cultural symbolism and infer auspicious wishes. Since the inception of the art, numerous diverse styles of paper cutting art have been evolved across the regions of China.

With the renewed interest in the cultural creative industry over recent years, the significance and value of the traditional art in China has been reevaluated and explored. Paper cutting art has been examined in a number of areas within China, however, a valid analytic and multi-faceted study had yet to be developed. This limited the academic community, museum professionals and practitioners from obtaining an empirical-based understanding of the explanation for variables in styles and measures of innovation. Consequently, research drawing on the holistic nature of the development of the art is of considerable theoretical and practical interest to these communities.

To address the problem of the differing styles of paper cutting and drivers of innovation across the regions of China, a qualitative research design was employed. A review of the historical development of paper cutting art was followed by visual analysis and qualitative interviews to determine the explanations for variables in styles, wider cultural influences and the innovation and application in modern design. A taxonomy of the primary factors influencing the recent developments of the paper cutting art is presented and a theoretical framework provides a holistic explanation of the interconnected and interrelated drivers acting on the artist and artistic community.

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## **1 Introduction**

Paper cutting art originated in China and has played a central role in Chinese cultural art over the past 3000 years. The art is regarded as one of the most common and recognisable forms of folk art in Chinese traditional society. It has developed into numerous styles across the different regions and with each style possessing distinct aesthetic properties due to the differing culture within each region. Beyond its origins in China place, the art of paper cutting also developed across the world in more modern times with diverse contemporary interpretations.

The aim of this chapter is to lay the foundations of this thesis and provide the context for subsequent chapters. The chapter begins by providing the research background and leads on to the development of two research questions that underpin this research. The validity of this research is justified and supported by a preliminary outline of methodology. The chapter ends with a summary that reiterates key points addressed during the chapter, paving the way for the literature review and subsequent chapters of the thesis.

### **1.1 Background to the research**

In China, it is common for the manipulation of cultural form in order to fulfill beliefs, and in this respect, paper cutting art is practiced as a means to seek hope and comfort [Cheng, 2009, p.70]. In addition to this spiritual expression, the art is used as a home decoration that embodies cultural significance through use of traditional symbols, which have assisted in making paper cutting a prolific art form. As a result of the numerous regions of China, the art has developed in different and diverse styles that continue to evolve. Due to the quantity of the paper cutting styles, both within and between the regions of China, methods of classifying the distinctive paper cut style appears superficial. Several classification methods published within the academic literature have aided the research community develop a formative understanding of diverse regional styles. However, the proposed theories tends to rely solely on a singular

criterion such as geography [Zhu, 2010, p.20; He, 2004, p.18], aesthetic features [Zhang, 2005] or end use [Wang, 1996], when numerous interrelated factors can be attributed to the apparent diversity. For instance, factors including government policy or other local art activity need to also be considered as attributes contributing to stylistic variation. Also, a system that combines visual examples with a prologue to exemplify each style has yet to be established. This has prevented researchers developing an empirical understanding of the development of paper cutting art. Therefore, this thesis will provide a complete classification system and has the potential to be of considerable interest to the academic community.

With the aforementioned interest in generating a new system of classification for paper cutting art, it became apparent that the account of the stylistic differentiation of Chinese paper cutting styles remained unclear. Though several theories have been proposed, the scale of discussion was narrowly focused. Sun and Li [2008, p.72] discussed paper cutting styles from the Yellow River focusing primarily on artistic technique. He [2004, p.18] proposed classifying styles by geography and local art activity. Rong [2010, p.331] theorised based on four influential drivers (geography, local custom, cultural background and aesthetic preference) but focused on a purely aesthetic-oriented discussion. Similarly, Wang [2010, p.35] indicated four drivers: article shape, environment (weather, economy, culture), material and tool, and artistic preference. The aforementioned studies indicate the potential unexplored relationship between influential drivers, the action and outcome in order to show a comprehensive account of the art form alongside suggestions for innovation. These contributions may be considered from both theoretical and pragmatic perspectives.

Moreover, the assumption of paper cutting art has developed exclusively as an East Asian art form should be challenged. The literature addressing paper cutting from a purely applied perspective has largely focused on the method of production. Little attention has focused on paper cutting and as an art form that has developed distinctive aesthetic styles in other countries beyond China. Chen and Tao [2008, p.1] proposed Israeli paper cuttings tend to have

symmetrical composition; American paper cuts placing elements around pictures; Switzerland's style is realistic; while Mexican paper cuttings exhibit a religious purpose. Researchers moving beyond a primarily aesthetic discussion included Christensen [1989, pp.11-17], who illustrated the history of paper cutting art in Japan. Geiser [1994, pp.124-137] studied paper cutting art in a European context and Frankel researched Jewish cultural paper cutting. This literature further indicates that cultural factors (local character and customs) influence style of the art. This research contributes to the understanding of the development of the paper cutting as international art form through an in-depth investigation of the art within its country of origin where it has developed and maintained national cultural heritage and significance.

There has been a noticeable increase in the use of paper cutting imagery in recent years, with new interpretations of the traditional art by modern artists and designers. This is of process of innovation of cultural art forms and produce may also be of considerable interest in the context of other cultural crafts and products. This thesis examines the innovative measures applied to paper cutting through case study, which aims to provide a practical reference to practitioners of cultural art.

## **1.2 Research problems**

In China, with the increasing interest in the growth of the cultural creative industry, in recent years paper cutting art has been investigated for its potential for innovation. There is a great amount of empirical geography-related research, however this has notably failed to address how variation occur among regions has not been addressed. This has prevented an empirically informed basis for the understanding of the multifaceted development of paper cutting and feasible suggestions for innovation and reinvention. Consequently, the established research problems have led to the following research questions to be addressed in this thesis:

*RQ1: What styles of paper cutting art typify the regions in China?*

*RQ2: What explains the variations in paper cutting styles?*

As the abovementioned statement indicates, this thesis initially draws on variations in Chinese paper cutting styles between and within the regions of China, followed by investigating the reasons for these variations including the development and innovation of the art. In order to identify the numerous regional styles, a classification system is constructed based on the analysis of archival and visual data (chapter four). For this purpose, visual examples, descriptions of styles and illustrated colour-coded maps supplement the classification, providing original detailed additions to previous methods of classification.

The ephemeral nature of paper cutting art has inevitably undergone some transformation in order to fit with modern life [Liang, 1989, p.42]. Transformation refers to aspects of content design, choice of material and end use. An investigation into these changes requires consideration of the relations between the influential drivers, the action and the outcome. The study intends to discover the influential drivers contributing to these changes in order extend the existing theories. The research began with a review of relevant literature followed by field investigation. This qualitative research method was employed as a valid, reliable and multi-dimensional explanation for variables (chapter three). The analysis of archival and empirical data is provided in chapter five and six. Findings including a typology and a theoretical framework were constructed through interpretation of interview data and the relationships between sectors are inferred. The thesis therefore develops a more thorough analysis that extends the existing literature.

The research also explores the development of paper cutting in different countries, although it is often assumed the art form is limited to East Asia. This area is neglected within the literature as the art form has been developed diversely beyond its origins in China. Variations of the design in several countries are discussed in chapter eight. Local habit, character and art preference are contributed to the alterations in style. The evolution of paper cutting in modern society has resulted in practitioners infusing new thinking in aspects of content, material and application. With the increasing use of paper cutting art imagery in modern product design



exploration of ideas derived from paper cutting are also discussed in chapter eight. Major transformations in the choice of material respond to mass demand and durability. In this sense the iconic accessibility of imitating the original material of paper is a primary challenge to modern design.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The aim of this research is to increase the understanding the origin and development of Chinese paper cutting art, producing a theoretical framework to explain the influences and variations in the art form across the regions of China. In order to address this research problem, the stages and research methods utilised are summarised below.

The initial research stage involved a historical review of literature in order to study the origin and historical development of Chinese paper cutting. This enabled identification of a theoretical gap in knowledge and lead to the formulation of research questions. Guided by the literature, styles regarded as unique by highly regarded authorities were sampled for further survey. Through analysis of study of previous theories, government documentation and museum systems of classification a system for the visual analysis and classification of paper cutting categories was determined and undertaken. After determining the target interviewees, field observation and in-depth interviews then followed-up the visual analysis to further investigate possible explanations for perceived differentiation. The process of translating and interpreting field notes facilitated understanding and data analysis. The multi-faceted analysis of the development of paper cutting art in China suggested measures for preserving and renewing the traditional art. Finally, drawing on the archival and empirical research, a theoretical framework was established showing interrelated connections between the drivers, actors and outcomes of the process.

The development of paper cutting art in other countries is discussed as an avenue for further investigation in consideration of the international interpretation of paper cutting art. A table of

the development of paper cutting in different cultures presented alongside examples of how the art has been used in modern product designs. This further research would enable investigation into the evolution and diffusion of paper cutting art and methods used in regenerating traditional cultural art forms.

#### **1.4 Definition**

The definition of paper cutting art refers to the tools of production involving paper and cutters (knife or scissors). As these tools are widely accessible to a general practitioner and are not exclusively the domain of professionals, paper cutting is categorised as a ‘folk art’ rather than a ‘craft’. The under-estimated artistic status results from the ephemeral nature of paper, which decreases the value of the art within the market. In accordance with the Chinese government’s classification, established by the Ministry of Culture [2010], paper cutting is classified as a ‘traditional art’ (coded 315, VII) and is referred to as such throughout this thesis.

The visual paper cut form features are flat, intricate and mostly symmetric. The symbolic meaning and traditional symbols imposed by the design embody historic and cultural significance, which makes the art an auspicious entity as well as a decorative object. As a consequence of the diverse regions of China, numerous styles have been cultivated with distinct aesthetic qualities relating to local customs. As a region has traditionally at least one style, any variations within a region may result from different ‘cultural environments’. In this sense, the definition of cultural environment refers to a life style formulated by geography, migration, art activity, government policy and economic development. This study aims to gain an understanding of stylistic variables within regions, explanations for any differentiation, developments outside the place of origin and the potential for innovation from the traditional form.

This research activity involves decision-making criteria for determining unique regional styles. The criteria employed established whether the style was acknowledged through regional or

national award or by a recognised authority in paper cutting. In the area of modern paper cutting, the criterion was based on unique innovation in terms of content, technique and application. In order to investigate examples of product design derived from paper cutting, areas such as fashion and home decoration were considered in order to discuss the diversity of transformation and innovation.

## **1.5 Outline of this thesis**

This thesis consists of eight chapters and is structured as follows. A brief overview of the research project is presented in chapter one. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature, which provides theoretical guidance and knowledge of Chinese paper cutting art, assisting in identify gaps in knowledge in order to develop research questions for further study. The methods used within this research are considered in chapter three. Research questions and research design are discussed, followed by measures of sampling, collecting and analysing data, and concluding with considerations of the limitations to the methods employed within this thesis. The research process was primarily guided by qualitative research methods.

Chapter four presents a classification system of Chinese paper cutting. The chapter draws from the literature to develop a framework for conducting a holistic method of classifying regional styles with reference to previous studies, government documentation and museum management. To achieve a greater understanding of variations in regions, each selected representative style is analysed in subsequent chapters.

In pursuit of answering the research questions, in-depth discussion of the variations in regional paper cutting styles in China is provided in chapter five. In order to establish a multi-faceted analysis of development, various areas are examined including the relevant political, historical, aesthetical, economical and educational influences. The chapter indicates differentiation of styles between the north and the south areas, in addition to clarifying measures of preservation and innovation.

Building on the analysis of stylistic variations presented in the preceding section, chapter six provides an interpretation of interview data as a means in exploring the emergent theoretical concepts. The thesis conceptualises the relationship between influential drivers, their action and outcomes through development of a theoretical framework based on analysis of archival and empirical data. Chapter seven draws together the significant aspects of the research results, and findings constituting an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge. The implications of these findings are considered alongside avenues for further research.

With regard to avenues of further study, potential investigation extends beyond the China to other countries and application of traditional art in product design. Discussion within chapter eight suggests feasible measures for innovation through international examples of the development of the traditional art form. This final chapter illustrates the regeneration possibilities of paper cutting art and suggests potential for future investigation.

## **1.6 Summary**

This chapter has outlined the foundations of this thesis. The theoretical gap in existing literature, an adequate classification system, and the analytic explanation for variables of paper cutting design have been drawn together to compose the research questions. The study will commence with a literature review followed by an investigation into the development of paper cutting in China, the differentiations in regional styles, explanation for variables in styles and the development of the art beyond China and within the area of product design. The method of investigation has been outlined alongside the associated research issues and the rationale for the research. With these foundations laid, a review of literature follows in the subsequent chapter.

## **2 The origin of Chinese paper cutting**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chinese paper cutting is a prominent folk art that reflects the cultural understanding, significance and symbolism, making it attractive nationally within China. The art form originated in the agricultural region near the Yellow River [Cheng, 2009, p.67]. Local people developed and passed down paper cutting as part of their traditional heritage resulting in considerable cultural influence in Chinese society. Paper cutting was not created initially for decoration but utilised as a mean of reflecting sentiment as well as a medium to fulfil customs and beliefs [Cheng, 2009, p.70; Qiao, 2010, p.8].

The objective of this chapter is to review historical development of paper cutting. Attention is focused on the origins of the art form, its application and techniques, and how the art has varied stylistically across the regions for China.

### **2.2 The historical development of Chinese paper cutting**

The idea of hollowed-out art appeared as early as the Neolithic Age [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.10]. According to historical resources from excavation studies, the earliest origin of paper cutting can be traced back to 206 BCE–23 CE [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.8]. It formed its distinctive style between 265–316 CE; flourished during 420–581 CE; fully developed in Sui and Tang Dynasty (581–907 CE); and became popular during the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty (1368–1911 CE) [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.3]. With this continuous development, paper cutting art was applied in various styles. According to Wang [2007, pp.17–39], in the Tang Dynasty, paper cutting art was influenced by the worship of Buddhism and is used as a medium to preach. In the Sung and Ming Dynasties, the art began to be made professionally and associated with product design. The patterns of traditional graphs were applied to

commodities (e.g. fans, lights and pottery). In addition, the suggestion of the use of paper cutting designs for embroidery has developed since the Qing Dynasty.

Evidence suggests that paper cutting was fully developed by the 6th century CE with the oldest surviving paper cutting dating back over 1500 years. This was discovered within tombs in Gaochang, Xinjiang, China, between 1959 and 1966 [Wang, 2007, p.13; Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.8]. Pieces of paper cuttings initially formed part of the burial ritual, either buried with the dead or burned at funeral ceremonies [Jiang, 2000, pp84–96]. Furthermore, Cheng [2009, p.71] and Wang [2007, p.14] proposed that as surviving items were technically well executed, this suggests the art potentially originated earlier than accounted for in the discovery report from Xingjiang museum.

According to Lee and Shou [2006, pp.10-14], of the seven pieces found, six consisted of floral graphs surrounded in circle shapes with only one depicting the human form, these are illustrated in Figure 2.1. The paper cutting shown in Figure 2.1 (a) exhibits an octagonal graph containing a picture of a lotus [Jiang, 2000, pp84-96]. In China, each art piece of art conveys spiritual significance; in this case the flower symbols imply fertility [Kao, 2009, p.49]. According to Lee and Shou [2006, p.10] the implication of this paper cut suggests the more offspring you have and the more happiness you obtain. Figure 2.1 (b) consists of horses facing each other and is created using a folding technique. In 1960, a piece called "monkey pair" was discovered, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 (c) [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.8]. The only piece containing human figures, shown in Figure 2.1 d), is suggested to have been created for the purpose of wizardry [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.13]. This pattern was designed to call back the soul of dead [Jiang, 2000, p.86]. The graph illustrated in Figure 2.1 (e) is described as a car wheel, while graph (f) is named chrysanthemum. Both of these were used to worship ancestors and were found between 1966-1969 [Jiang, 2000, p.90].

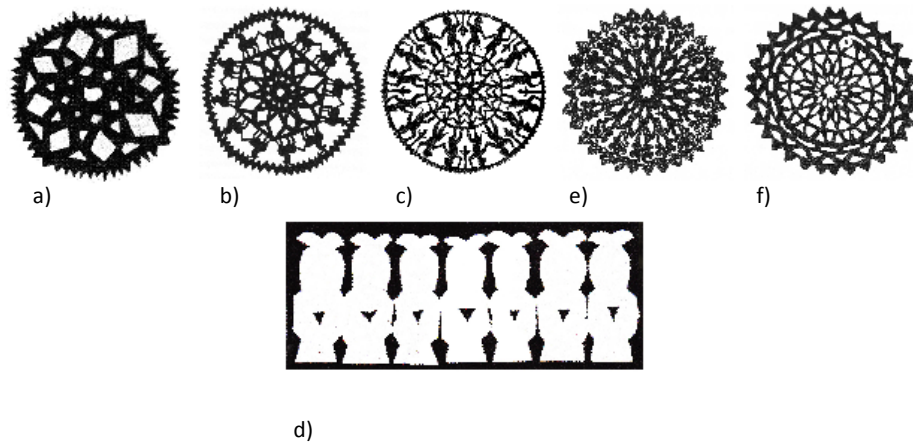


Figure 2.1 Illustrations of Paper cuttings unearthed in Xinjiang province

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2009, p.8], Lee and Shou [2006, p.13]

Jiang [2000, pp.84-96] discussed the origin of surviving pieces, classifying graphs into three categories: plant, car wheel and animal print. Regarding to his theory, the car wheel pattern indicates the life style of north nomadic people as well as the power of bringing fortune in Han nation's concept. As to the animal graphs, the pronunciation of deer and monkey in Chinese are similar to good salary and promotion. All of which make paper cutting filled with wizardry. Lee and Shou [2009, p.103] illustrated that paper cuttings are commonly used in folk ceremonies such as birthdays, rites of passage, weddings and funerals. Taking the wedding ceremony as an example, in this context paper cutting is considered to be one of the foremost decorations. For this occasion, patterns like flowers (peony symbols for happiness), animals (fish stands for male) and auspicious words are arranged in circle graphs as illustrated in Figure 2.2. It is believed that every design has to be cut in one piece instead of composition segment in order to obtain good signs [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.48].

In relation to the implications of the art, Cheng [2009, pp.70-71] pointed that traditional folk habit determines development of paper cutting. He mentioned conceptual wizardry culture includes god worship, totemism and nature worship. Wizardry activities evolved from religion and spread the idea through paper cutting art. It is suggested that in ancient time, since people lacked of scientific development and resulted in production depression, ancestors

believed every myth comes from cosmic plan conducted by spirits [Qiao, 2010, p.5]. Therefore, paper cuttings were often used in religious ceremonies as decorations for sacrificial offerings. In addition, in particular region, paper cutting is implemented as an amulet to get rid of diseases or a symbol to call back the soul of dead [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.13 and Qiao, 2010, pp.4-5]. Take Hebei province as an example, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, a doll is pasted to the window to dispel bad spirits and bring happiness. Similarly, Shanxi style presents imagery of children holding hands to signify endless spirits, as shown in Figure 2.4. Furthermore, New Year festival is another occasion that require paper cutting. In this case, the art presents as window flower (pasted onto windows as illustrated in Figure 2.5) mainly and also can be seen on gates, furniture and walls [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.16]. Since a new year suggests a new start, the method aims to lead fortune to come. In relation to design topic of window flower, graphs are created according to similar pronunciation of auspicious words. For instance, a folk slag "a house is full of gold jade", then the graph is presented gold fishes and lotuses [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.186].



Figure 2.2 Examples for wedding decoration

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2009, p.57]



Figure 2.3 Illustration of paper cuttings for dispel bad spirit in Hebei province

Source: reproduced from Lee and Shou [2009, p.35]



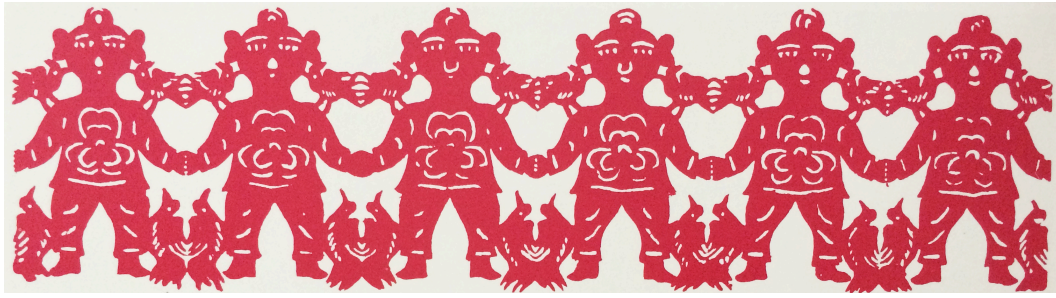


Figure 2.4 Illustration of paper cuttings for endless spirit in Shanxi province

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993, p.20]



Figure 2.5 Illustration of window flower

Source: reproduced from Boxuetu.com [2011]

As its literal meaning, paper cutting is made by paper. In terms of the material, it is too fragile to preserve adequate artworks, which make it difficult to unveil and decode its mystery [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.30]. In order to avoid bias, the study goes further to its related tools and materials. The officer, Cai Lun, who was in charge of instruments and weaponry in the period of Han Dynasty in China, is considered the innovator of paper [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.7]. However, paper cutting is thought to predate that time by several hundred years. Researchers believe the time of paper was invented is earlier than Han dynasty yet the quality was not good enough to make paper cutting [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.7]. The pristine paper was composited more like fiber and was not competent of producing intricate images [Wang, 2009, p.24]. Paper was initially made as a replacement for inadequate substance such as bamboo and silk as writing tools [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.4]. In this case, the invention ends up not only improving communication, but also influences on literature and consequently expands to

mass use. Moreover, it has been developed from an everyday necessity to aesthetic commodity. Scissors are the main tool that used for paper cutting production [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.46]. Referring to Qiao [2010, p.6], its earliest form seems to have originated in the Bronze Age. In other words, scissor is invented earlier than paper [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.7]. Scissor is crucial for woman especially in countryside. They are common used for domestic chores and art. At first, paper cutting was reserved to high-society women as an aristocratic hobby [Bell, 2005-2010]. Later, as can paper become more democratic, paper-cuts make their apparition in lower classes of society [Bell, 2005-2010]. In cultivated society, female are the majority to make this folk art [Wang, 2009, p.78]. Women were the key of passing over traditional heritage by creating paper-cuts and also used this as diaries to express themselves [Qiao, 2010, p.9]. They thought the art as a hobby like embroidery and a media to present believes and emotion, and the tools are accessible [Qiao, 2010, p.10]. In conventional farming life which involves prolonged periods of manual labour, paper cutting was thought to be a method of escaping reality, an immersive realm [Qiao, 2010, p.11]. At that time there was no such thing as woman rights, they did not do this for art or attempt on being famous but recorded their true feelings of experiences and surroundings [Lee and Mao, 2009, p.199]. They teach offspring since childhood. It starts with draft and eventually nails the skill without planning. It may take over ten years to be professional. In addition, many of the paper cutting masters are illiterate but the ability of creating the folk art is mellowed [Qiao, 2010, p.10].

Similarly, Wang [2009] indicated that in the countryside, the art was conducted primarily by women and was seen as one aspect of female culture [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.12]. From Wang's [2009] viewpoint, female paper cutters fulfilled their wishes and furthered the heritage of traditional Chinese artwork at the same time. Wang proposed that the feminine paper cutting culture was established under Chinese traditional regulations, which considered the male superior to the female. Men were in charge of families and providing a livelihood whereas women ran the home and raised children. As a result, women spent more time at home and had the opportunity for domestic recreation. This would appear to explain why the

number of female paper cutting artists precedes that of males. Furthermore, the art was evaluated as a refined criterion for girls in ancient times. As girls did not attend school, skills such as embroidery, weaving, stitching and making pillowcases were considered entertainment as well as talents [Wang, 2009, p.83]. Furthermore, paper cutting was regarded as a craft skill that every girl required and was regarded as an aptitude by which to judge potential brides [Wang, 2009, p.85]. Therefore the greater the skill and professional performance of a woman, the more highly regarded her reputation.

With the development of society, paper cutting is generating to various forms and used for decoration in our life. The tradition seems to be transformed to suit modern world more. Although material or colour may be different through innovation, auspicious significance and cultural impression stay.

### **2.3 Chinese paper cutting styles**

The development of Chinese paper cutting was effected by geographic nature. As a result, paper cutting styles are vary from different areas, each of them manifests a region's singular characters [Qiao, 2010, p.8]. Generally speaking, in southern area of China, the art presents delicate and smooth outlines while in northern region, people are used to create bold lines and exaggerated composition [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.15, Wang, 2009, p.45]. The influential factor which lead the art into different styles is suggested to be regional individuals' characters. [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.15] It is acknowledged that people in northern area are more proactive than people in southern provinces. In this case, a general description of art feature has been saying, " delicate south, gritty north" [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.15]. Similarly, Qiao [2010, p.8] illustrated that in terms of nomadic life style, paper cutting in northern area appears wild sense. In contrast, the art created from southern countryside shows elegance [Qiao, 2010, p.8]. Also, Wu [1991, p.95] illustrated that the most common used reference for folk art creation is life experiences. Regarding to geographic reason, it is easy to divide paper cutting art into two types which is northern style and southern style. However, Pan and Miao [2009] pointed that

classification is not only based on location but also distinguished style that outstand in this field. The following chapters are going to discuss the four most recognizable styles in the field: Heilongjiang style represents ethnic group in the north part of China; Yu County style illustrates unique colouring technique; Shaanxi style preserves substantial amount of traditional patterns; Foshan style manipulates metal material in addition to paper. The more elaborated version of discussion about regional styles is in Chapter 3.

### 2.3.1 Heilongjiang

The development of paper cutting art in Heilongjiang starts before paper material is invented and appears on thin sheets of metal, fish skin, bark, and animal skin [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.15]. The region shows exotic art style resulting from significant numbers of emigrates [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.15]. The art is to combine local habit with other ethnic group's distinctive styles [Wu, 1991, p.96]. For instance, unique costume design of Man group is depicted substantially in the area, as illustrated in Figure 2.6. Confined by fine and bold lines, the design has transferred mysterious style of emigrants into simple and accessible beauty in silhouette style [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.16]. Speaking of motif design, life scenery (Figure 2.7), local habit (Figure 2.8) and natural scene (Figure 2.9) are mostly illustrated. Furthermore, most of the work are derived from traditional paintings and cut in relief and intaglio [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.16]. As a result, in this province, the art presents exaggeration either in portraits or landscapes [Feng, 2004, p.76].



Figure 2.6 Illustration of Heilongjiang paper cutting ‘Man Woman’ produced by Qing Quan Fu

Source: reproduced from China Art World [2007-2009]



Figure 2.7 Illustration of Heilongjiang style

Source: reproduced from hailun government [2011]



Figure 2.8 Illustration of Heilongjiang paper cutting ‘Man wedding’

Source: reproduced from xianger [2010-2014]



Figure 2.9 Illustration of Heilongjiang paper cutting ‘Su Zhou Garden Series’

Source: reproduced from China Art World [2007-2009]

Moreover, Wu [1991, p.95] addressed the art feature of Heilongjiang is eclectic. However, in terms of Culture Revolution (1966-1976) in China, the art encounters difficulties. First, in order to serve political demands, the creation is misguided. Second, imitation makes the art lose originality. Third, the outline of paper cutting becomes similar to traditional Chinese painting, which inclines to develop more like paintings instead of paper cutting, as illustrated in Figure 2.10. From Wu's point of view, it is suggested that people should discover the connection between tradition and modern style and raise it to a higher level.

In response to Wu's theory, modern artists in this province have been experimenting with new material [Liu and Liu, 2009]. Qing Quan Fu, the artist inherits talent from her family, is considered to be a leader in this field [Chinese Paper Cutting Net, 2008-2011]. Fu extracts from "Hezhe" group's fish skin culture and applies on her creation (Figure 2.11), though she comes from "Man" group [Wang and Wang, 2004, pp.54-57; Liu and Liu, 2009, Wang, 2010, p.170]. The artist blends two cultures and comes up with new interpretation. Also, redesigning human figures breaks the old expression of paper cutting, as illustrated in Figure 2.12. Fu specializes in cutting paper without sketching in advance builds up recognizable style and reputation. The artist does not see the art seriously just plays it as recreation initially and turns out to be the outstanding artist [Liu and Liu, 2009].



Figure 2.10 Illustration of Heilongjiang paper cutting ‘Sunshine’  
Source: reproduced from China Art World [2007-2009]



Figure 2.11 Illustration of works produced by fish skin  
Source: reproduced from Heilongjiang daily news [2010]





Figure 2.12 Illustration of Qing Quan Fu's paper cutting, 'Grandmothers'

Source: reproduced from zghljz.com [2007]

### 2.3.2 Yu County

According to Zhang [2004, p.49], paper cutting art in Yu County starts from Qing Dynasty. The main style of this region is 'window flower', refers to paste art works on the windows as a home decoration, as shown in Figure 2.5 [Zheng, 1993, p.6; Zhang, 2004, p.50]. Local habit towards the art is to change new window flower every year to pray for luck. Also, the art is used for embroidery mostly used by female artists [Bo, 1995, p.62]. Colouring and cutting techniques are regarded the renowned features in the field [Zhang, 2004, p.48; Lee and Shou, 2006, p.155]. Pointed colouring methods refers to combining white wine with pigment and to paint point by point, as illustrated in Figure 2.13 [Zheng, 1993, p.6; Lee and Shou, 2006, pp.155-156]. In discussion of cutting tools, different sizes of gravers are used in addition to scissors [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.153].

In the aspect of content design, auspicious patterns are depicted significantly including botany, animals (Figure 2.14) and opera figures (Figure 2.15) [Bo, 1995, p.62]. Chinese opera figures, in particular, is regarded the most representative style of the region [Tian, 2010, p.143]. When speaking of the representative artist in the region, Lao Shan, Wang (1889~1951), is acknowledged the master of the art [Zhang, 2004, p.45; Wang, 2006, pp.106-107; Lee and Shou, 2006, p.125]. As a farmer in a conventional village, Wang studied paper cutting since childhood and became a professional at age of twenty [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.126]. The main contribution is to create approximately 1000 styles of Chinese opera figures [Bo, 1995, p.63]. Detailed costumes design and vivid performing gestures are regarded the iconic features, as



illustrated in Figure 2.16 [Wang, 2007, p.107]. Wang believes cutting tools reflect the degree of a professional [Zhang, 2004, p.48; Lee and Shou, 2006, p.129]. Therefore hundreds of cutting tools are made specially to achieve professional result [Bo, 1995, p.63]. Accordingly, in order to depict opera figures vibrantly, unique colouring technique is invented to manifest gradient effect and extreme contrast that contributes to establish the style of the region [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.130].



Figure 2.13 Illustration of pointed colouring technique in Yu County



Figure 2.14 Example of botany and animal motif in Yu County style

Source: reproduced from Shu [2005, p.100]

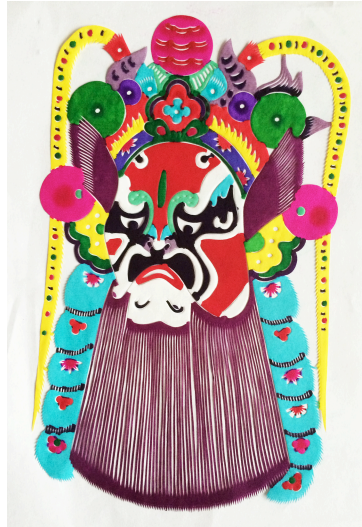


Figure 2.15 Illustration of a facial mask of Chinese opera figure in Yu County



Figure 2.16 Illustrations of Chinese opera figures produced by Lao Shan, Wang

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993, p.82], Shu [2005, p.96]

### 2.3.3 Shaanxi

In terms of the central location (inaccessibility), paper cutting art in Shaanxi province is well preserved. According to Bai and Yu [2009, p.25] that paper cutting art in this region is called a living fossil due to its inheritance of Chinese traditional culture and habit, as illustrated in Figure 2.17. A great deal of traditional pattern represents the region's life philosophy, local custom, and wishes to produce offspring. Reproductive patterns are iconic design in the area

such as an eagle steps on a rabbit, fishes play with lotus, or a snake circles a rabbit, as illustrated in Figure 2.18.

According to Wang [2006] that in conventional society, the art is passed over from generation to generation by women. Paper cutting skill is used as criteria for judging a qualification of a bride. It is believed that the better paper cutting skill a woman has, the better wife she will become. The concept still remains at present time and people who possess mellow paper cutting skills are respected by the multitude [xtour, 2004]. In the aspect of content design, Chinese opera figures, animals and botany are popular motifs. Artistic style is abstract and imaginative, majorly in singular colour (red). Referring to Ren [2005] that artists in this region show surreal style of composition that combine objects from different timeline, as illustrated in Figure 2.19.

In discussing representative style of the region, Shu Lan Ku (1920-2004) appears to be the master in the area [Zo, 2003, p.14]. Though the artist lived in a small village in poor condition, her work has made her recognition and a multi-awarded artist [Han, 2005, p.90]. The works show profound history of paper cutting in radiant colours alongside the unique perspective towards traditional art [Han, 2005, p.90]. The art is reinterpreted as a medium to escape from unpleasant life in addition to reflect life experience and imagination. Creative songs came along while doing paper cuttings to stimulate inspiration. The unique measure is interpreted as a type of imprecation therefore made Ku a renowned artist and is named a "Paper cutting Lady" [Zo, 2003, p.15; Kao, 2009, p.54]. Symmetrical layout, coloured and glorified paper are the signature design, as illustrated in Figure 2.20. Green and blue are predominantly that symbol affection to nature and local customs [Han, 2005, p.93]. Furthermore, it should be noted that human figures are created in conceptual way instead of imitating real objects [Han, 2005, p.93; Kao, 2009, p.48] that made the art transformed the traditional imagery. In addition, in terms of the inaccessibility, works are not affected by modern influence therefore contributes to distinctive results.



Figure 2.17 'The grapes in Turufan is ripe' produced by Fa Ian, Zhen

Source: reproduced from Chen [2009, p.184]



Figure 2.18 Example of traditional pattern

Source: reproduced from Sun [2007, p.41]





Figure 2.19 Example of overlapped style produced by Zhao'e Fu

Source: reproduced from Tao and Chen [2008, p.130]



Figure 2.20 Example of Shu Lan Ku's work

Source: reproduced from Kao [2009, p.49]

#### **2.3.4 Foshan**

Guangdong province is considered the representative style for the south area and Foshan style is regarded the most renowned example that embodies more than one thousand years of history [Ian and She, 2009, p.6]. The use of wide-range of motifs with diverse type of materials constitutes a distinctive style among regions. Besides celebrating festivals, driving out evil spirit and praying for long lives, this region is considered the first attempt to transform the art to product and to trade internationally [Ian and She, 2009, p.6]. According to Ian and She [2009], the history of marketing the art could be dated to Qing Dynasty where paper cutting studios and private organization had been established broadly to the market. In this sense paper cutting brings economic contribution to the area therefore made the region the most influential productive art base.

In order to stimulate the sale, the art is produced with diversified materials in vibrant colours. Materials like gold foil, silver foil, copper foil and slices of glass are implemented in addition to coloured paper. Copper foil style, in particular, is regarded the distinctive feature of the region, as illustrated in Figure 2.21. In aspects of cutting technique and content design, round engraving knife is used majorly in addition to scissors, as illustrated in Figure 2.22 [Sue, 2010, p.160]. Besides using metal material, the traditional paper cuttings represent colourful style; socio incident, economic activity, life scenery and local custom are depicted mostly, as illustrated in Figure 2.23 [Ian and She, 2009, p.9].

Chi Ian, Lian started to do paper cutting in 1963 and is regarded played an important role in passing the art to next generation [chinayigou, 2011]. His participation in innovation that invented over 160 kinds of coloured paper had tackled high demand of development and established colourful layers as a iconic feature as a result [Ian and She, 2009, p.121; China online, 2010]. The artist tends to find inspiration from surroundings, and reinterprets local scenes, as shown in Figure 2.24. Lian believes that life experience is the root of creation and in order to produce new design constantly, getting involved deeply into life is an efficient way

[Ian and She, 2009, p.123]. He used to compose the graph conscientious and combined with traditional images with modern skills and resulted in gradient layers, as illustrated in Figure 2.25 [Ian and She, 2009, p.123].



Figure 2.21 Example of paper cutting work made in copper foil

Source: reproduced from Pleasure Life [2011, B08]

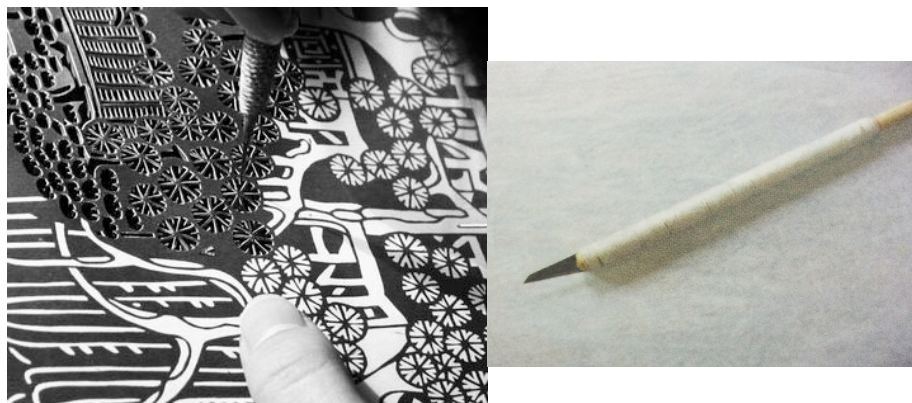


Figure 2.22 Example of Foshan paper cutting work produced by round knife

Source: reproduced from Citygf [2011], Ian and She [2009, p.5]



Figure 2.23 Example of life scenery motif in Foshan style  
Source: reproduced from Ian and She [2009, p.190]



Figure 2.24 Illustration of Lian's paper cutting work 'Tai Lady'  
Source: reproduced from Foshan Daily [2011]



Figure 2.25 Illustration of Lian's paper cutting work 'Flowers and Birds are welcoming Spring'  
Source: reproduced from Foshan Daily [2011]



Examples listed in this chapter discussed four regional paper cutting styles. Due to different geography and cultural background, diverse styles are cultivated accordingly. In the northern part of China, Heilongjiang province presents exotic styles in terms of a great deal of emigrants. Yu County style in the capital province is renowned by its unique colouring technique and is highly valued and respected by the support from government. In terms of inaccessibility, Shaanxi style represents local life style by depicting substantial amount of traditional patterns. Foshan style regarded a representative style for using metal material in the south area, is the pioneer to commercialise the art of paper cutting and makes profits to the country resulting from the popularity of trading activity near the seafront. With the aforementioned examples it became apparent that different attributes result in different development. The explicit discussion for the issue is provided in chapter 6.

## **2.4 Paper cutting Techniques and Components**

Paper cutting is hollowed out but linked. Scissors and engraving knife are main tools in this art. Lines cut in relief are connected while those cut in intaglio are broken [Xu, 2008, p.7]. Since it is difficult to demonstrate proportion and perspective in a three-dimensional version, “layer upon layer” and “different scenes separated by one facet” are often seen in this part. According to Xu [2008, p.8] that in order to create exaggerated and compact images, artists adopt shadow composition to strengthen contours in an exaggerated and concise way. In this sense three cutting methods are proposed comprising direct cutting, symmetrical cutting and folded cutting. Direct cutting refers to cutting paper from the edge to the centre; symmetrical cutting is to cut the same patterns on half-folded paper; folded cutting as the literary meaning is to cut even and repeated designs on folded paper.

In discussing the tool for production, it is believed a professional to have more than twenty cutting tools. Chin [2009, pp.1-5], Bai and Yu [2008, p.46] and Zhang and Zhang [2009, pp.36-47] proposed five basic equipment including scissors, knife, rubbing stones, paper and paraffinic boards. Scissors regarded the main tool in this field and is recommended to choose

as similar size as creators' hands. Sizes are varying to cut different scales of works, as illustrated in Figure 2.26. Two types of knives are mentioned in this place including flat and round. Round knife is the main cutting tool used by Foshan style that manipulates copper foil in addition to paper, as shown in Figure 2.27. In order to keep cutting tools sharp, rubbing stones play important role in cutting process, as illustrated in Figure 2.28. Beginners are expected to learn how to sharp knives before start cutting lessons [Ian and She, 2009, pp.65-66]. Paraffinic boards are used to put underneath paper to make cuttings accurate and efficient, as illustrated in Figure 2.29. Also, wooden boards and leather boards are substitutes to paraffinic one. Power bag is considered to avoid paper stitch to paraffinic board. As to the selection of paper, five types are mentioned including semi-transparent paper, red paper, xuan paper, glazed paper and card paper (128g, 150g, 157g).

In discussing paper cutting technique, Bai and Yu [2008, pp.48-51] classified six basic cutting patterns. First, crescent, as illustrated in Figure 2.30 a) named by the shape, mainly appears in intaglio to signal eyes, mouth, eyebrows and features of clothing. Second, the pattern called saw tooth as illustrated in Figure 2.30 b), is depicted intensively among others to present stereoscopic effect and extensity such as animals' fur, bird feathers, beards and moustaches [Xu, 2008, p.8]. Third, leaf pattern is the easiest one among others that usually practiced as first lesson to learn by beginners, as illustrated in Figure 2.30 c). Fourth, sun pattern, as illustrated in Figure 2.30 d), is used to articulate details such as eyes, buttons, animals' facial features and pistils. Also, it is used as an element to be combined with other patterns. Fifth, water drop, as shown in Figure 2.30 e) is similar to sun pattern that used as a component of a graph. Sixth, cloud pattern, as illustrated in Figure 2.30 f) is regarded the most difficult pattern to illustrate that requires mellow skill to achieve elegant effect.



Figure 2.26 Illustration of various sizes of scissors

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2008, p.36]



Figure 2.27 Illustration of engraving knives used in Foshan

Source: reproduced from foshandaily [2011, B08]

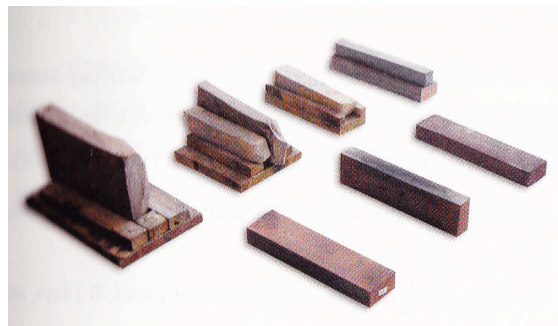


Figure 2.28 Illustration of rubbing stones

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2008, p.37]

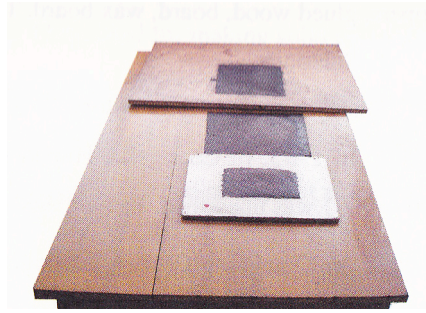


Figure 2.29 Illustration of paraffinic boards

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2008, p.37]

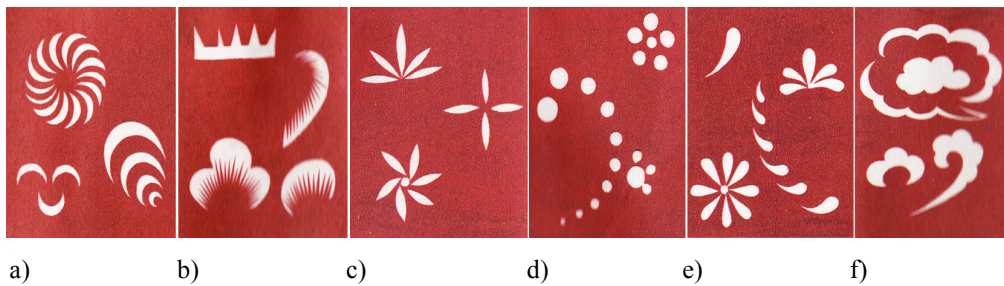


Figure 2.30 Examples of traditional paper cutting patterns:

a) Crescent b) Saw tooth c) Leaf pattern d) Sun pattern e) Water drop f) Cloud pattern

Source: reproduced from Bai and Yu [2008, pp.49-51]

## 2.5 Symbolism in Chinese paper cutting

Adoration of life is the main idea of Chinese paper cutting [Jing, 2010]. The art is manipulated as a tool to express people's good wishes towards life [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.54]. In ancient times, totems like chicken, tiger, snake and deer are regarded to have power to protect people. This concept is resulted from the lack of productive industry and sciences that people are inclined to worship god and contributes to habit of religious ceremony therefore designs are majorly used for religious ceremony [Zhou, 1993, p.64; Liang and Liu, 2011, p.167]. Yang and Ann [1994] pointed Chinese symbolism is mainly used in praying for luck, expelling bad spirit, blessing for love and offspring. Also, Wang [2009, pp.179-181] proposed paper cutting symbolism is a means to reflect local life style.

When speaking of numerous types of symbols, Wang's classification contains three categories including natural biology (flowers, plants, animals), life scenery and Chinese legendary characters [2009, pp.179-181]. Designs are in connection to folklore, festivals, celebration, ceremony and social event. Colours and outlines are two crucial elements to constitute a symbol. Colours like red, white, yellow are mainly used in celebration, funeral and sacrificing ceremony. Red symbolises the origin of life, the power of sun and south that is mostly seen in celebration. Whereas yellow appears mainly in religious ceremony that signals centre, loyalty and majesty. The history of such colour implementation can be traced back to Han Dynasty. On the other hand, the style of outline appears differently in terms of different level of emphasis.

To the extent of design connotation, some symbols signal auspicious meanings in terms of its pronunciation. For example, "a lotus in a bottle" implicates peace [Jing, 2010]. Kao [2009, pp.13-15] pointed six methods of presenting auspicious. In this place implication is the first to mention in terms of the popularity. For instance, "a fruit contains many seeds" implies a wish to having many offspring. Second, interpretation is to select specific plants into a graph and make an idiom of it. Third, metaphor is used to indicate specific significance. For example, see a tiger as a sign of grittiness. Fourth, define subjects according to folk stories. For instance, a rabbit means the moon; a gold coin indicates wealthy; a cypress signifies a long life. Fifth, use similar pronunciation to imply auspicious meaning. For instance, "eagle" implicates "hero"; "bat" sounds like "happiness". Sixth, combine symbols with Chinese characters to strengthen the blessing meaning.



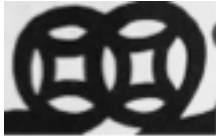

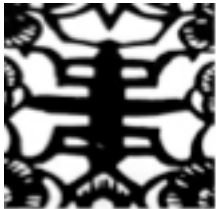









In discussing the variation of design, in terms of the volume of ethnic groups and regions in the area, diverse styles are cultivated as a result [Liang and Liu, 2011, p.167]. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in detail the many individual symbolic icons used in paper cutting but this section will broadly consider the key symbolic elements used with the craft to

convey various meanings. The symbolism of paper cutting art is further discussed in the following chapter. Table 2.1 provides a generalized introduction of paper cutting symbols.




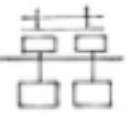
Table 2.1 Symbolism of paper cutting art

Type	Symbol	Significance
Legendary characters	Eight immortals	Noble characters
Historical figures	Guan Yu	Brave
Animals	Bat	Pronunciation is similar to ‘happiness’
	Butterfly	Love and happy marriage
	Bird/Magpie	Good sign and news
	Crane	Long life
	Deer	Pronunciation is similar to ‘wealthy’
	Dragon	Authority/Nobility
	Elephant	Idiom ‘good’
	Fish	Man/Wealthy/Fertility
	Frog	Woman/Fertility
	Horse	Energetic/Success
	Kylin	Offspring/Long life
	Lion	Guardian /Fertility (when play with colourful balls)
	Monkey	Pronunciation is similar to ‘promotion’
	Mouse	Fertility
	Peacock	Beauty/Nobility
	Phoenix	Beauty/Peace
	Rabbit	Women/Fertility
	Snake	Man/Fertility
	Tiger	Worship as a god to protect children
	Toad	Wealthy
	Turtle	Long life

Domestic animals	Chicken/Rooster	Man/avoid bad luck
	Cow/Ox	Strength/Hard working
	Dog	Comes with 12 zodiac animals
	Lamb	Obedience for parents
	Mandarin duck	Love and happy marriage
	Pig	Pronunciation is similar to 'happiness'
Botany	Calabash/Melon	Fertility
	Chrysanthemum	Comes with bamboo, plum blossom, orchid as elegance
	Bamboo	Nobility
	Grapes	Fertility
	Lily	Happy marriage
	Lotus	Nobility
	Orchid	Long life
	Peach	Long life
	Peony	Wealthy
	Pine	Long life
	Plum blossom	Nobility
Articles	Container (Vase/Bowl)	Fertility/Safety
	Fan	Elegance
	Instrument	Diligent for scholar honor
	Chess	Diligent for scholar honor Fortune
	Book	Diligent for scholar honor
	Painting	Diligent for scholar honor
Chinese word	Fu	Fortune Wealthy
	Lu	Longevity
	Shou	
	Xi	Happiness
Symbolic	Wan	Good fortune

pattern	 	
	Money  	Wealth
	Shou  	Longevity
	Dimond  	Love
	Ball  	Love
	Cross  	Sun and life
	Ruyi  	Good fortune



	Brick	Wealth
	 	
	Xi	Happiness
	 	

Source: reproduced from Liang [2011, p.166]

### 2.5.1 Botany

During hunting period, flowers had not been evaluated valuable until cultivate time [Kao, 2009, p.11]. In Shang Dynasty, viewing flowers was considered as a popular leisure activity. While viewing, people came up thoughts associated with humanity, spirit, and morality and discovered profound philosophy in addition to admire the beauty of flowers [Liu, 2010]. Wang [2009, p.180] pointed that flowers are used to imply female in terms of the delicate identity. Also, different kind of flower is given distinctive definition. For example, a peony is to imply wealthy and nobleness in terms of the inaccessibility, as illustrated in Figure 2.31. A chrysanthemum is considered to symbol a perseverance character resulting from its blossom time, fall [Kao, 2009, pp.40]. Similar to chrysanthemum, a plum blossom is in connection to persistence in terms of florescent season [Liu, 2010; Kao, 2009, p.56]. A lotus is used to present a noble character that keeps flourishing in dirt environment, and is the symbol of Buddhism to signify purity and luck, as illustrated in Figure 2.32 [Zhen and Wei, 2009, p.29; Kao, 2009, p.48]. Furthermore, fruits like calabashes, pumpkins, grapes, pears, cabbages are manipulated to symbol wishes for producing descendants in terms of the quality of multiple seeds [Liu, 2010, p.39]. Lee and Shou [2006, p.194] illustrated that pumpkin and gourd are

used to symbol uterus in terms of physical shapes. In addition, orange is used to symbol luck resulting from the similar pronunciation.



Figure 2.31 Example of peony paper cutting

Source: reproduced from Sun [2007, p.18]



Figure 2.32 Example of lotus paper cutting

Source: reproduced from Yun-Fun Paper Cutting House in Ci County [2011]

### 2.5.2 Animals

In traditional symbolism, animals that possess strong fertility are used to implicate the wish of having babies [Liu, 2010, p.39]. For example, mouse and rabbit are respected as the god of multiplication. Wang [2009, p.180] proposed that Lu analyzed a series of symbols related to fertility. In her theory, animals like cat, tiger, fish, bird and chicken are used to imply male,

while frog is indicated female. Xu [2008, p.9] pointed that designs like “snake coiling around a rabbit”, “the eagle pursuing a rabbit” and the “baby with two pigtails”, are used to imply the wish of having babies. Also, tiger, rooster, spider and toad are illustrated to expel bad spirit in order to obtain luck. On the other hand, crane and tortoise are interpreted as a blessing of longer life in terms of its unique creatures and living circles. Also, peacock is regarded as the icon of intelligence and peace and is used to present elegance and brilliance, as illustrated in Figure 2.33 [Liu, 2010, p.40]. As to celebrating weddings and love, gold fish, goose and mandarin duck are often shown in pairs, as illustrated in Figure 2.34 [Wang, 2009, p.181]. Gold fish, in particular, is used for decoration since Ming Dynasty. It is regarded as glory and fortune in terms of its fine appearance as well as the pronunciation is similar to wealth [Kao, 2009, pp.99-123; Liu, 2010, pp.39-40]. In this case, pronunciation of Chinese characters determines the subject of creation. For instance, “cow” indicates “diligent”; “dog” means “loyalty”; “pig” stands for “sincerity”; “deer” in Chinese sounds like “prosperity”; “rooster” symbols “nobility”; “tiger” equals “mightiness”; “bat” in Chinese has the same syllable as “happiness”.

In addition, it is interesting to note that spider is considered to signal luck in terms of its nickname pronounced the same as good thing in Chinese [Kao, 2009, p.93]. Moreover, butterfly in many art forms may be considered to indicate women in terms of delicacy. However, in paper cutting art, it is characterized as male [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.197]. For instance, graphs combine butterfly with pumpkins indicate the wish of giving birth [Wang, 2009, p.184]. Besides, twelve zodiac animals, as shown in Figure 2.35, are used for paper cutting motifs in the beginning of years to denoted the year of birth, which include rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig, and each stands for the year in the order of zi, chou, yin, mao, chen, si, wu, wei, shen, you, xu, hai [Art.china.cn, 2011; Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.79].



Figure 2.33 Example of peacock paper cutting

Source: reproduced from Han [2011, p.43]



Figure 2.34 Illustration of mandarin ducks swimming together

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993, p.57]



Figure 2.35 Illustrations of twelve zodiac animals

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993, p.114]

### 2.5.3 Chinese characters

Chinese auspicious words are commonly combined with lucky symbols to strengthen the blessing wishes. Fu (fortune), Lu (wealth), Shou (longevity), Xi (happiness) are four popular Chinese characters used in the field, as shown in Figure 2.36.

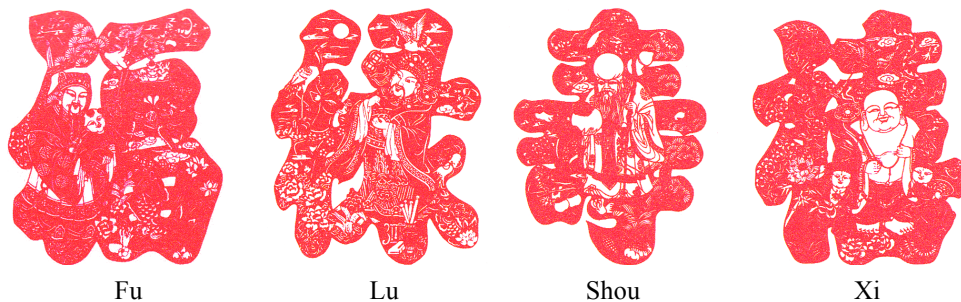


Figure 2.36 Illustration of Chinese auspicious words

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2008, p.55]

### 2.5.4 Human figures

Human figures are of the popular themes in Chinese paper cutting to signal inspiring features including deities, eight immortals, historical heroes and novel characters [Xu, 2007, p.77]. Deities signal belief and blessing that convey comfort to people [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.88]. Eight Immortals, as illustrated in Figure 2.37, represent man, woman, the old, the young, the rich, the noble, the poor and the humble [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.94]. The imagery of the Eight Immortals crossing the sea is regarded as a symbol of health, auspiciousness and happiness [Shu, 2012, p.123]. Historical heroes and characters from

classical novels are depicted to symbol their brave and noble characters to encourage people. For example, characters in Three Kingdoms (one of the great classical Chinese novel) are portrayed with distinct personalities. An example of this case would be Guan Yu, as shown in Figure 2.38, symbols benevolence and is often used for warding off bad spirits. Some figures are pasted on the door during Chinese New Year to bring good fortune in and expel bad luck [Zhen and Wei, 2009, p.45].



Figure 2.37 Illustration of Eight immortals

Source: reproduced from cultural reconstruction of national tax bureau in Shandong province [2008]



Figure 2.38 Illustration of Guan Yu

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2008, p.115]



### 2.5.5 Daily use article

Relations between subjects and consciousness are not come up meaningless. Sentimental acknowledges result from general experience, observation and imagination [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.196]. In paper cutting art, women are often associated with graph of containers in terms of physical reason that women carry babies and give birth. In this case, bowl and vase are composited with animals that symbol male (rabbit, butterfly, mouse) in graphs to express happy marriage, as illustrated in Figure 2.39. In addition, teapot denotes life and procreation [Xu, 2008, p.25].



Figure 2.39 Example of vase paper cutting

Source: reproduced from Yun-Fun Paper Cutting House in Ci County [2011]

## 2.6 End use of Chinese paper cutting

Different end use contributes to various forms. According to previous study that styles are classified into nine categories: ceiling flower, door hangings, fan flower, floral pattern, gift flower, lantern flower, religious flower, toy paper cutting and window flower [Zhou, 1992, p.25; Zhen, 1993, pp.2-3; Shu, 2005, pp.5-6; Wang, 2007, pp.65-67; Wang and Chou, 2007, p.57].

‘Window flower’, refers to designs applies on windows suggesting the style is according to applied frames and is regarded the most traditional style in the north of China in terms of dry weather condition [Wang, 1993, p.2; Wang, 2007, p.65]. In some regions (e.g. Inner Mongolia, Hebei province), paper cuttings are used for preventing from wind and sand and

evolve to sophisticated decoration gradually [Wang, 2007, p.106]. In order to make the design pervious to light, transparent paper and water colouring are commonly employed. Auspicious symbols (legendary story, opera figures) are majorly depicted to signal blessing wishes. Red is adopted majorly in terms of festive connotation of Chinese culture. Similarly, 'Door hangings', a rectangular style (approximately 15x20 cm), is applied to doors and also used during the Chinese New Year. This type is produced by different sizes of engraving knives, 100 pieces at one time. The distinct style is the combination of Chinese auspicious words and traditional lucky symbols. In addition to the traditional colour (red), yellow, green, pink and purple are mostly seen and these five colours of pieces are considered a set of the series. The order of the colour varies according to different areas [Shu, 2005, p.124; Li, 2007, p71; Shu, 2008, p.112; Li, 2011, p. 189; Wang, 2011, pp.106-107].

The design of 'Gift flower' applied on gifts (e.g. teapot, soapbox and furniture) is used in celebrations such as wedding, promotion and birthday party. In order to strengthen the blessing wishes, auspicious symbols (dragon, bird, botany) are teamed up with Chinese words. Also, metaphor is used popularly, for instance, a peach signals long life and zodiac animals symbol god for protecting children. Similarly, 'Ceiling flower' refers to paper cuttings applied on walls and roofs and is used in celebrations§ (e.g. auspicious symbols and legendary story) is regarded the distinct feature of wall style. Whereas traditional symbols and geometric remain on roof style. In terms of the indoor location, this style preserves longer than other styles [Wang, 1993, p3; Wang, 1993, p.150; Wang and Chao, 2007, p.57; Chin, 2009, p.148].

In terms of the worship of ancestors and god in Chinese culture, paper cuttings are used substantially in religious ceremony. 'Religious flower' is applied onto sacrificial offering in religious ceremony. Also, 'Doshan flower', made in seven colours (gold, red, pink, green, blue, yellow and black) of glossy paper, is particularly designed for religious articles. Legendary characters and god are popular subjects. Besides using the art as decoration for









ceremony, Li [2007, pp.70-71] proposed ‘Toy paper cutting’ is used at leisure time associating with lantern, paper dolls and curtain. Wang [1993, p.2] pointed that ‘Lantern flower’ refers to design for lantern festival appears in the southern part of China. ‘Fan flower’ refers to patterns designed for decorating fans [Wang, 2007, p.67].



Besides utilizing the art as a medium of decoration, ‘Floral pattern’ is used for embroidery on costume design [Wang, 1993; Zhang, 2005, p.5]. In this sense the style is designed according to the shape of applied objects such as shoes, collar, sleeves, and results in variations. Auspicious symbols such as botany, butterfly, and dragon are mostly seen on body part whereas tiger is often employed on children’s wear in terms of the meaning of protection.

In order to comprehend variables of designs, Table 2.2 provides a clear classification of different end uses.

Table 2.2 End uses of paper cutting art

Features		Applied object	Occasion	Artistic feature	Representative
Style/Imagery					
Ceiling flower		Wall and roof	•Festivals Chinese New Year •Wedding	•Wall style: a sequence of patterns •Roof style: central and symmetric	The north of China
Wall style	Roof style				
					
Door hangings		Door	Celebrate the Chinese New Year	•Rectangular style •A set consists of five colours	Ju County (Shandong province)
					
Doshan flower		Religious	Religious	•Colourful	Nanjiang

	articles	ceremony	•Botany/Lucky symbols /Legendary figures	city (Jiangsu province)
Floral pattern	•Embroidery •Costume •Furniture	Daily use	•Animal/Botany •Style is determined by the design of costume	Yunnan province
				
Gift flower	Gift Daily articles	•Moving to new house •Promotion •Wedding	•Auspicious pattern •Chinese words for celebrating wedding	
				
Lantern flower	Lantern	Lantern festival	•Auspicious patterns (e.g. animal/botany) •Legendary figures •Opera figures	Quanzhou city (Fujian province, the southern part)
				
Religious flower	Sacrificial offering	Ceremony (wedding, birthday, funeral)	Style is determined by applied food	Putang (Fujian province, the southern part)
				

Toy flower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lantern</li> <li>•Dolls</li> <li>•Fan</li> </ul>	Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Animal</li> <li>•Botany</li> <li>•Legendary figures</li> </ul>	Shandong
				
Window flower	Window	Celebrate the Chinese New Year	Style is determined by the shape of the window	The north of China
				

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993, p.226-264], Wang [2007, p.66], Wang [2011, p.71], Chin [2009, pp.69-109], Liang and Liu [2011, p.166], Wang [2011, pp.173-179], Sun and Sun [2014], Xinhua News Agency [2010]

## 2.7 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the history of Chinese paper cutting art and the established knowledge of the composition of the art form. The chapter critically evaluates the relevant literature in order to guide the research project, refine the research questions and direct the methodological process.

Every art form has its process of development [Ian and She, 2009, p.191]. In order to keep its relevance, traditional art should update with societal changes. The primary feature of paper cutting art is the symbolism that is used to convey both aesthetic sense and meaningful significance. Through decades of development, the paper cutting has transformed into numerous diverse styles. Heilongjiang style represents a blend of ethnic groups. Yu County style manifests unique colouring skills. Shaanxi style articulates traditional symbols within its inaccessible environment. Foshan style has commercialised the art for international market aided by its seafront location. In consideration of the aforementioned examples, it is apparent

that paper cutting has the potential to be developed a simultaneously diverse manner across China.

In order to undertake a detailed study paper cutting art the emphasis of the research focused on China. This chapter introduced the historical background of the art of paper cutting followed by a brief analysis of regional styles. Informed by previous research and classification methods presented in the literature, previous explanations for the variations of regional styles was also highlighted. Considering the large number of regions, a theory that each region develops at least one style was formulated. This implies an inherent complexity to the influential drivers establishing these variables in style. With the foundations of the study laid, the research methodology is discussed in the subsequent chapter.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

During the study of paper cutting art, three aspects have been highlighted: the historical background originating from Chinese culture, the method of classifying regional styles and the development of the art through times. It was discovered that a theoretical gap appeared in relation to an appropriate method for classifying distinctive styles and the explanation for certain changes. These lead to formulation of the research questions. Seeking to respond to research questions, the design of this research involved two stages: an archival approach to enable a holistic system of classification and interview research to elucidate explanations for changes in the art.

Having decided upon the research design, attention is subsequently directed towards a mixed method approach. In this case qualitative research methods are employed, which concentrate on accessing the diverse social environment, groups and populations that live in specific surroundings. According to Berg and Lune [2012, p.7] the method of qualitative research comprise multiple-approaches including historical analysis, observation of natural surroundings, recording techniques (photographic and videotaping) followed by document and note analysis, and so forth. To accomplish this a critical review of literature is followed by utilising the data gathered to establish a new system classification and visual analysis for paper cutting.

Fieldwork trips were undertaken to obtain primarily information involving both observation and interviews. Consequently, to deal with large amount of data, several methods are adopted such as sampling, textual analysis and visual analysis, followed by interpretation and representation. This chapter comprises a detailed description of the procedures related to collecting archival data and undertaking a systematic visual analysis. However, before the

discussion of research methodology, it would be worthwhile to revisit the research question in order to refocus the aim and intentions of the study.

### **3.2 Research questions**

According to Flick [2006, p.105], constructing the research questions is focal step before making decision about other explicit methods. The formulation of research process follows generally accepted steps, including review of the relevant literature, identification of the variables and constructing research questions [Kumar, 2005, p.1]. In order to acquire a thorough understanding of the art form, this study must trace the historical background of paper cutting in China before investigating its development. As the art dates back over three thousand years, hundreds of individual styles have been formed. To access variables, attention is also focused on the method of classifying regional styles.

According to Marshall and Rossman [2006, p.39], research questions are must relate to the problem and its significance, and should predict the literature to be reviewed. Having explored the origin, classification and development, this study will address the following questions:

*RQ1: What are styles of paper cutting art typify the regions in China?*

*RQ2: What explains the variations in paper cutting styles?*

During the literature review, sampling occurred as a crucial part of the research helping to focus the study precisely on the characteristics of interest [Fink, 1995, p.3]. In order to discover changes of design, selecting symbolic examples to exam seems to be an efficient method. When finding representative samples in China, in terms of the volume of regional styles, the criteria established was according to factors like geography, culture, distinctive techniques and materials and whether the regional style is carried out through innovative and commercial means. Also, measures of classifying distinguished styles that used by highly

regarded units such as government and theme museums are referenced to validate the decision in addition to measures proposed by previous study. By examining cases from a range of approaches of classification the study had the potential to reveal inadequacy of the system adopted currently. The first question therefore draws up not only variation of design but also a reconsideration of method of classifying styles.

The second question extends the enquiry by searching explanations for changes of design. It follows that by understanding variables of design in the scope of selected samples, and the reasons underpinning the decision of approach, it should become apparent how practitioners reinterpret this traditional art to response the demand of modern society. In exploring the development of the art in current times, the research considered how participants innovate the idea of the art and the reasons determined the approach. In addition to search answers from artisans, influential sectors like government policy, activity of institution and local custom are also taking into consideration. By knowing how such transformation is formulated, it should enable the development of a theoretical framework of art participation.

Both questions make the intentions of study explicit and indicate the data that needed to be assembled. In accordance with searching answers these problems are able being tackled reasonably. The following section the research design addresses the method adopted to shape these questions.

### **3.3 Research design**

The process of formulating research problems into two specific questions clarified the aim of the research and determined what data needed to be gathered. During the study of paper cutting art, three aspects have been highlighted: the historical background originating from Chinese culture, the method of classifying regional styles and the development of the art through times. In order to be explicit, the area is focus on China. From the literature it is discovered theoretical gap appears in adequate method of classifying distinctive styles and

explanation for certain changes, which lead to formulate research questions. Seeking to response research questions accurately, the design of this research concludes two stages, archival approach for a holistic classification and interviews for explanations of changes of the art.

Having made the design of the research, attention is subsequently pointed towards a qualitative research method, which concentrates on accessing diverse social environment, groups and people who live in certain surroundings. According to Berg and Lune [2012, p.7] that methods of qualitative research comprise multiple-approaches including historical analysis, observation of natural surroundings, recording techniques (photographic and videotaping) followed by document and note analysis, and so forth. To accomplish the chapter of literature review, data gathered is considered as secondary resources followed by a new classification and visual analysis. During fieldwork trip, both observation and interviews are involved to obtain primarily information. Consequently, to deal with large amount of document, several methods are adopted such as sampling, data and visual analysis, followed by interpretation and representing. The chapter comprises a detailed description of the procedures related in collecting archival data and visual analysis. However, before the discussion of research methodology, it would be worthwhile to revisit the research question in order to refocus the aim and intentions of the study.



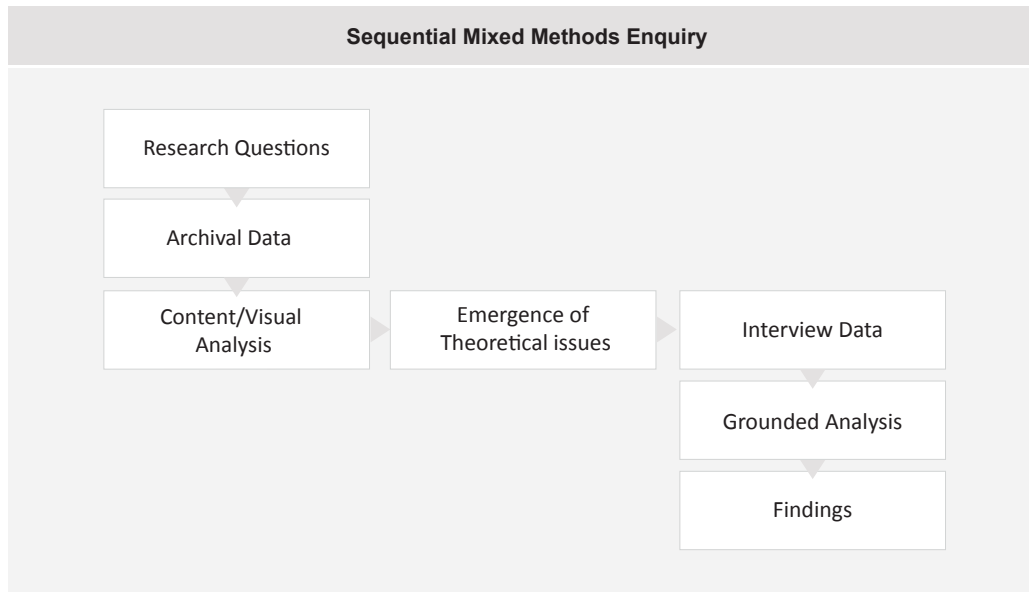


Figure 3.1 Research design methods

The two methods were implemented as sequential phases and therefore are undertaken independently with no overlapping weakness. A research method involved with multiple methods relating to interaction and humanity is regarded a type of qualitative research [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.3]. The study is conducted through qualitative research methods, which are particularly suited to the study of changes and diversity in aspects such as values, beliefs, understandings, perceptions, and meanings [Keegan, 2009, p.58; Kumar, 2011, p.104] and identify relevant variables have not yet been found [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.53]. Also, the main interest for a qualitative researcher is to discover how individuals of specific surroundings make recognition of these settings through various aspects such as symbols, formal system, structure and roles [Berg and Lune, 2012, p.8]. In terms of the design of qualitative research is modified by virtue of a series of decisions [Flick, 2006, p.124], a number of alternatives is implemented to response research questions. Therefore, two sequent measures are formulated; archival research for finding variations of styles and interviews for explanation. In this design the paradigm of two phases would enable the researcher to compare the findings and to illustrate inferences from the data.

Whilst framing the research design with specific methods indicated how applicable the study could be, it still had limitation. A fundamental weakness of this design was the time consuming data collection in the cause of prolonged history of Chinese paper cutting art resulting a great deal of literature review. Also, the cost of time and economy was taken in account in relation to explore development of the art in the nature world [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.3]. In this case, the first phase of the study dealt with archival data to conceptualize the research problem whereas the second phase involved with fieldworks to seek explanation.

Issues associated with the difficulties of applying these methods are discussed in the following sections including sampling, data collection and methods of analysis.

### **3.4 Sampling and Limitations**

In the first phase of the research the attempt was to search variables of Chinese paper cutting art, therefore attention draw on literature review to begin with. In order to obtain the maximum differentiations of the styles, assuming each province developed least one style in relation to the volume of cultures. Cases were selected internally consistent but distinct from one and another. In determining the extent to which a sample is a collective data, a diverse range of sectors was considered. The different categories directly constitute a classification [Hardy and Bryman, 2004, p.18]. Measures of classifying styles used by highly regarded units (government policy, theme museums) were adopted as one of reference in terms of reliability and justification. Referring to Flick [2006, p.133] that decision cannot be made isolated when choosing samples. To capture styles regarding to the degree of aesthetic perspective of classification, the numbers of cases were selected from previous study. Accordingly in the scope of referencing group 40 cases are determined to be representatives as a result.

Researchers are unable to study the in depth of relevant settings, phenomenon and population unless a study is narrowly constructed [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.61]. Despite the

limitation of inferences and sources, selected cases offered symbolic representation of unique style, and therefore enabled maximum variation of styles to be participated in the study. As a further means of enabling a great deal of styles and relative sites to emerge it were worth of targeting, constraints were imposed upon the sampling design. The measure is referred to Marshall and Rossman [2006, p.61] that if the study is related to a specific curriculum, party, environment or region then certain detail to the setting is considered important to the reader. Firstly each case must be considered to represent local identity, including ethnicity, habit and art activity. Secondly, the features of the style or site had to be distinctive or historical and therefore were recognizable and renowned in the field. The third criterion was that the style must have accomplished considerable extent of innovation. The assumption here is that in the scope of narrowed sample that had experienced reinterpretation of the art in a degree of aesthetic and commercial perspectives. The criterion imposed here aimed to select representative of best practice and value, and resulted in the most appropriate cases. Accordingly, works of regional representatives are chosen depending on which example of art features most fit in with local generalized description of the art.

The strategies mentioned above are referred to theory based and purposive sampling. The formal method was employed in the early stage to elaborate and examine examples through searching theoretical context [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.28]. Followed by purposive sampling (belongs to nonprobability sampling) that is applied to use researchers' knowledge to find representatives of population from some groups to certify certain attributes are not neglected in the study [Berg and Lune, 2012, p.52]. In this place, filed investigations were involved in addition to editorials. Accordingly, when making the decision of choosing survey candidates, strategy of snowball sampling (belongs to nonprobability sampling) was used to identify particular subjects with correlative attributes to interview [Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, p.87; Wengraf, 2001, p.102; Berg and Lune, 2012, p.52]. A respondent is identified to satisfy the criteria and then helps to locate others by her or his social networks [Arksey and Knight, 1994, p.4; Weiss, 1994, p.25]. The method was used majorly in Chapter three and

four when interviewing curators of theme museums, regional representatives and local paper cutting shops.

Limitation occurred when faced with specific style, art representative and settings appeared exclusive from referencing group but fitted in one or more of these criteria, an investigation was followed up. In this case the decision was made by if the example had received highly regarded credibility of reputation in terms of historical, economical value, and innovative achievement.

### 3.5 Data collection, analysis and Limitations (Phase one-Secondary resource)

While searching for satisfied cases the archival data was gathered from multiple sources [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.107]. Chinese paper cutting literature, edition of regional style, and online resources. First of all, a review of literature of Chinese paper cutting art enables the author to find potential cases for the study and identify regional representative, and indicated to use the information to do further online searches. Besides assembling relevant publications from physical stores, it should not be assumed that traditional samples are better in validity than Internet samples [Hewson, Yule, Laurent, Vogel, 2003, p.29] especially in the case of insufficient supporting information from published inferences. With thoughtful concern of accurate measures, internet-accessed data may be more representative [Hewson, Yule, Laurent, Vogel, 2003, p.28]. In this case official websites of government policy, relevant institution and portfolio of individual artist were considered reliable and resourceful database.

Table 3.1 Search strings

Search strings		
Research Terms	Information	Database
"Style Identity" "Representative Identity" "Organisation Identity" "Style" + "Innovation"	Case studies Publications Advertisements (leaflet) Web-based material Newspaper articles	Google Baidu WANFANG DATA CNKI

Concerning the volume of regional styles, information was also gathered by online searching tool (e.g. Baidu, Google databases). Accordingly, the search strings contained paper cutting and the name of province (assuming each province signals a paper cutting style) or paper cutting and the name of the institution that had organized relevant activity. For instance, the search for the method of classification used by highly regarded units in relation to search validity inference, consisted of the terms and operator like “Paper cutting art” and “Chinese government”. The outcome of this approach attributed to a precise webpage, “Ministry of Culture of the People’s Republic of China” contained protection scheme and the awarded list of Township of Chinese folk art (paper cutting), National Intangible Cultural Heritage (paper cutting) and Representatives for National Intangible cultural heritage (paper cutting). Additional information comprised the according laws and links of relevant organization. Institutions such as Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society was thought an considerable resource that allowed the author to intertwine information with other sources represented an informative means to further supplement other methods [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.107]. Additional sources such as periodicals, newspaper, magazines were sought on Internet sites (Wangfang Data and CNKI databases) that make articles available on-line using the names of both paper cutting and the province.



Figure 3.2 Phase one research process flowchart

Analytic issues remained within the literature on qualitative research relative to discussions of issues such as field relations, access and ethics [Miles, 1983]. In the course of literature review 40 paper cutting styles were identified to represent distinct styles in regions. The resulting materials comprising journal papers and publications indicated explicit content for the intentions were then subjected to a content analysis to clarify variation, along with preliminary research questions as guidelines to suggest categories in which could be coded for following analysis [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.156]. Interpretation, the approach led by continued readings of the source material enables to capture the essence of an account [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.8]. Through understandings of existing frameworks and logical reasoning, a new classification was generated which indicated theoretical gap in the published area, revealed a potential to further explorations. The new classification was established by conducting editing strategy, which was used to search for segments of information to generate

and illustrate categories of significance. [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.155]. The results were then conducted methodically, which was described in the following section.

The use of a content analysis is often associated with specified analytic method for describing and interpreting by using inferences and then transforming data into configuration [Patton, 2002, p.432; Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.108]. When dealt with numbers of proposed methods of classification to establish a grounded theory of a new classification, in order to present information systematically, narrative articles were transferred into summary, coding data, table and illustrative format. The measure allowed identifying overlapping categories and draw valid conclusions [Travers, 2001, p.46]. Therefore each method (selected and generated) was analyzed by conducting a set of illustrative display format, a Chinese map along with a matrix table. This form of data display enabled to comprehend the location of the style, the name of the style, and the uniqueness of feature. Meanwhile, data reduction was involved to condense description of distinct style [Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp.91-93].

According to Marshall and Rossman [2006, P.157] that in terms of raw material data contained minor characteristics unless interpretive measures were employed, the application of colour coding resulted in a comprehensive interpretation. To represent the location of regional styles, colour coding was applied when analyzed and illustrated data into Chinese maps to signal geographic concept. Whereas cases of paper cutting museums and galleries were coded in numbers according to launched time-ordered was in attempt to underline the development of the art in regions [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.240].

The objective of the content analysis was to identify the presence of variables of regional styles, therefore comparative analysis was constant employed and resulted in numbers of comparative tables in order to develop grounded theory. According to Huber and Garcia [1991] that qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) offers a simple, compact way of analyzing patterns of causation in a small to moderate number of cases. Similarly, Fielding

and Lee [1998] and Dey [1999] also noted that applying the comparison of approaches enables to raise conceptual questions to the technical extent of qualitative analysis. As a result analytic comparative tables were conducted with reference to Drass [Hardy and Bryman, 2004, p.539] that to process the analysis, a “truth table” is the first step to list various combinations of independent variables that appear in a data set along with their corresponding values and then the configurations within it are simplified.

In addition to the content analysis each case was subjected to a visual analysis to precisely define and describe variables of 40 paper cutting styles. A visual content analysis relating to observational and objective procedure was conducted by classifying sample of observable content into distinct categories. It is suggested that a systematic analysis is unable to conduct without a foundation of explicit hypothesis or well-defined variables. And each variable is of value of logical and ideally independent [Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001, pp.13-16]. Therefore the definition of categories was in consideration of aspects of how the art is represented such as unique feature, influential factor and social development. As a result dimensional variables were defined including imagery of representative work, gender of artist, aesthetic feature, material, colouring technique, cutting technique and popularity of the art in local area (Figure 3.4).

In order to achieve the required depth of analysis constituent elements were distinguished from within the content of the object [Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001, p.15]. The groups of aesthetic features are divided into three genres: colour (singular, mixed, dying), shape (circle, oval, polygon, rectangle, square, triangle, animal, botany, container, fan, human figure and Chinese word) and content (animal, botany, container, God, natural scenery, life scene, legendary figure, legendary story, social incident, opera character and Chinese word). Apart from physical features of images, brief description of generalizations of the frequencies of visual representations such as art activity, events, roles, renowned features, situations, or development were inclusive in the category of the popularity, followed by the section of




cutting technique (scissor, curving knife, chisel, tearing, burning, collage). In order to display analytical categories explicitly, a matrix table was conducted (Table 3.3). The results enabled variables of distinct styles emerging apparently and attributed to a new method of classification.

Table 3.2 Variables for visual content analysis

Visual variables		
Identity of artist		
Women	Men	Children
Aesthetic feature		
Colour	sigular/mixed/dying	
Shape	circle/oval/polygon/rectangle/square/triangle/animal/botany/container/fan/human figure/Chinese word	
Content	animal/botany/container/God/natural scenery/life scene/legendary story/social incident/opera character/Chinese word	
Material		
Paper	Metal	Others
Cutting technique		
Engraving knife	Scissors	Others
Popularity of the art (economic growth/activity/renowned identity)		

Table 3.3 Visual content analysis of Yueching style

Visual analysis				
Area	Province	Style	Origin	Producer
<input type="checkbox"/> The north <input type="checkbox"/> The Yellow River <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Changjiang River <input type="checkbox"/> The south	Zhejiang	Yueching	C.E.960-1279 (Song Dynasty)	<input type="checkbox"/> Children <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Men <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women
Imagery	Unique features	Colour	Shape	Content
	Dragon boat flower (lantern) Geometric pattern Thin line	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Singular <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed(paint) <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed(Collage) <input type="checkbox"/> Dying(Gradient)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Polygon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rectangle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Square <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Triangle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Botany <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Container (Bowl/Vase) <input type="checkbox"/> Fan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human figure <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese word	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Botany <input type="checkbox"/> Container (Bowl/Vase) <input type="checkbox"/> God <input type="checkbox"/> Natural scene <input type="checkbox"/> Life scenery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legendary figure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legendary story <input type="checkbox"/> Social incident <input type="checkbox"/> Opera character <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chinese word
Material	Cutting technique	Popularity		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Others	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scissor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carving knife <input type="checkbox"/> Chisel <input type="checkbox"/> Others	20/7560,000		

Source: reproduced from Cheng [2010, p.75]

A potential weakness of this method involved the potential extent of inferential interpretation [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.38; Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.108]. The use of visual content analysis allowed 40 styles to be analyzed in detail. Variables were defined through commonsense categories such as physical features of images of styles and generalizations of activities, which were not supported by any particular theoretical measure. Concerning the greater their frequency, the better their significance, when faced with a massive quantity of representative works in specified style, selections may be questioned the quality of validity. Moreover, the variation of paper cutting art in various dimensions relating to social activity is in relation to cultural complexity and such genre is not quantifiable [Leeuwen and Jewitt,

2001, p.25]. Therefore the most simplistic, socially conventional, objective categories can be studied and imply additional research in order to be validated.

### **3.6 Data collection, analysis and Limitations (Phase two-Primary resource)**

Following the analysis of archival data from the first phase of the research, the result of analysis pointed out the second phase of the study. Satisfied cases for the second phase of the research needed to include explanation for variation relating to various dimensions such as participants' characters, local habit, marketing strategy and social development. According to Miles and Huberman [1994, p.8] that the research relating to particular organization, setting and procedure is commonly regarded to the field of case study. The approach is considered not only exploratory but also explanatory. To implement the approach, methods of case study were determined by research questions: a) How has the content of paper cutting art changed over time, and b) If there are any changes, what explains these changes, which lead to a mixed method (exploratory, descriptive and explanatory) [Yin, 2009, pp.8-9].

With reference to Yin [2009, p.11] the case study relies on history, direct observation and interviews. Therefore method to collect data for case study was initiated with analysis of dated files followed by observation and interview. In order to focus in depth on the variation of regional styles and the development of paper cutting art, the research involved with a study of rich tradition of community, institutional settings, and innovative insight from practitioners. Direct observation and in-person interviews were then arranged to facilitate collection process and to validate histories [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, pp.97-164; Keegan, 2009, p.73].

In exploring the explanation for the variation of paper cutting style in China, attention was draw on aspects of tradition, preservation and innovation. According to Herzog [1996, pp.38-39] that the aim of field observation is to reveal a profound knowledge of the surroundings, to test certain statements or hypotheses and to comprehend how a system operates. With a consideration that the observable field is relating to an institutional structure,

or set of norms and program that shape works, convey significance and limit variations [May, 2002, p.80], observable cases were consisted of historical site (Chinese paper cutting street), community (Chinese paper cutting community) and museums (China paper cutting museum and Hua-Xia paper cutting museum) embodied profound tradition and distinct characters [Monette, Sullivan, and Dejong, 1990; Herzog, 1996, p.39; Silverman, 2011, p.63].

With reference to Marshall and Rossman [2006, p.105], interviewing of elites, which focused on particular type of interviewee that was considered prominent and influential in the area, enabled to obtain authoritative and representative opinion. Therefore informal interviews with curators were supplement during the observation. In accordance with Gubrium and Holstein [2001, p.301] that the term elite is commonly classified into sector categories such as political elites and community elites. Accordingly, determined observable cases were inclusive in the area. Since elite individuals are popular subjects in the mass media, source of information is considered accessible on the Internet [Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, p.305]. Searches were conducted using the names and generic position of organizations on the Google and Baidu databases with the intention of establishing contact information. For each cases information was gathered on the official sites, local art association network and travel agency. The ideal contacts in the identified cases were the curators of the museum and tour consultancies of the regions, as it is their profession to offer the strategic direction for the settings.

Having obtained relevant contact information for the cases using the aforementioned process, it showed targets spanned three provinces (Hebei, Hunan, and Jiangsu). To ensure the gaining access, a telephone contact was initiated with the curator of Hua-Xia museum, the first paper cutting museum in the field, with a polite introductory: an introduction of the investigator, the purpose of the study, the reason for reaching the respondent, a summary of potential involvement, the trustworthiness of emerging discussion, the use of recorded information and further contact information [Keats, 2001, p.22]. When mentioning of the institutional position and the degree of study, the respondents showed interests in terms of its foreign status and the

potential for the interview to appear in print, thereby turning welcoming gesture [Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, p.311]. After making a successful appointment the target's name was used a referral mechanism when contacting to China paper cutting museum.

With the indicative outline of the observations completed and the scheduled confirmed, the observations were conducted in two types: the one with no planed conversation involved and the one combined with unstructured interviews. The formal method was used when observing historical sites of paper cutting (Chinese paper cutting street, Chinese paper cutting community) and local shops. Photos and transcription were kept recording continuously to capture reality of the settings. Visiting local shops was spontaneous schedule with no appointment prearranged. Stimulating conversation happened unexpectedly when observing local shops, topics of conversation were mainly draw on how to manage the business while working on creations, the distinct style and current development of the art in local area. As a result two shop owners were generous to share experiences and allowed to take pictures of work scenes. In returning the favour the researcher purchased products in the shops. The later method was used with curators while visiting museums conducted in the following manner: After engaging in introductory small chat and a brief exchange of business cards, the participating observations started with taking photos of the settings. Unstructured interviews were initiated with a summary of the project and its intentions, followed by the explanation of why the participants were chosen and the main topic of discussions to remind information that mentioned in phone contact before. In terms of the informal style, conversations were guided with the focus of the history of the museum, the background of curator, the strategy to manage the museum to avoid leading astray. Apart from background-oriented issues, attention was paid on what was unrevealed on web information, such as the obstacles of managing and future prospect. With the formal experiences of interviewing, two curators were proficient to satisfy enquiry. At the end of meetings, the intention of consuming product (publication, artefact) from the museum was to gather inferences as well as to express gratitude.

Besides the primary data-gathering method outlined above, the researcher is eligible to incorporate secondary and supplemental methods in the design of a study [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.113]. Additional information comprising individual differences as well as unrevealed opinions is the advantage of interviewing for research [Keats, 2001, p.20]. In order to assemble the knowledge of innovative insight of paper cutting art implemented by regional representatives and the explanation for variations of styles, interviews with awarded artists were involved in the strategy (interview of elites) [Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, p.301]. Preparation of ethical approval was applied and permitted by the university before planning an interview. The researcher was informed to address demands such as chosen participants were aware of the research, had right to join the activity or not and remain anonymous [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.90].

In addition to the accessibility and the expense of travelling, with reference to Hughes and Cormode [1998, p.2100] that to study elites according to geographic sector, interviews with artists were arranged within one province, Fujian, to address the style of the south. Searches were conducted using the names of the artist on the Google and Baidu databases in attempt to obtain contact information. The ideal contacts were local representatives or local cultural minister, as it is their profession to provide the explicit information for the style of the art. When contacting with potential interviewee, politeness was the most concern in both verbal and physical manner regarding an interview was a social interaction [Keats, 2001, p.23; Berg and Lune, 2012, p.141]. As a result a contact with Zhangpu County cultural minister proved to be effective in gaining access to the four local representatives identified through the process of snowball sampling [Arksey and Knight, 1999, p.4; Weiss, 1994, p.25]. Additionally, a Quanzhou city based artist was agreed to participate in an interview through persistent communication by telephone. To express gratitude, a moderate gift to an interviewee was in consideration regarding to the custom of Chinese culture.

As Gubrium and Holstein [2001, p.310] suggested that when interviewing elites, it is inevitable to be questioned about researcher's identity and status. Therefore the introductory was rehearsal in advance. In terms of the purpose was to derive interpretations from respondent speech, the method of qualitative interviewing was employed, aiming to understand the meaning of respondents' knowledge [Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, p.83]. To ensure efficiency, the format was based on guided conversation conducted by emphasized questions and answering. Semi-structured interviews were utilized, studying the background and interests of individuals to conduct appropriate questions in advance [Sieber, 1992, p.18; Wengraf, 2001, p.5; Berg and Lune, 2012, pp.140-145]. Furthermore, this strategy allowed modifying in response to interviewee to meet desirable information. Moreover, to explore new leads, the emergent form stimulates the process of the interview [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.38; Schostak, 2006, p.50]. Accordingly, by times of interviews, questions were able to revise to achieve better result.

Whist formulate interview questions, theory-questions are not equal to interview questions. In attempt to discover the explanation for variations of styles, questions to art participants were to discover influential factors. In this case author took the concept of theory-questions and re-designed new interview questions. For instance, to meet the research question: what explain the changes of paper cutting style, the author designed the question to more than one queries such as what is the opinion of current development of paper cutting art or what kind of influential factors affect the design. As a result obtained narrative accounts directed to the answer for research questions [Wengraf, 2001, pp.62-67].

Table 3.4 Formulation of interview questions

IQ no.	Theory-question	IQ formulation
1	What are styles of paper cutting art typify the regions in China?	How do you get involved with paper cutting art?
2		What is the unique feature in local area?
3		What is your design pattern?
4	What explains the variations in paper cutting styles?	Is there any influential factors such as artists or life experience affect your design ?
5		What is your opinion of current development of paper cutting art?
6		What is your marketing strategy?
7		What is your future prospect?

In order to answer research questions precisely (the first sought a clarification, the second sought explanations), questions were designed according to different background of the interviewees including shop owners, curators and artists, as shown in Table 3.5. The emphasis of questions to shop owners laid on the development of the art in local area; the focus was on classification system while interviewing curators; questions designed to seek methods of innovation, when interviewing regional artists.



Table 3.5 Formulation of interview questions

Type of interviewee	Interview Questions
Artist	<p>How do you get involved with paper cutting art?</p> <p>Is there any influential factors such as artists or life experience affect your design ?</p> <p>What is your signature design?</p> <p>What is your future prospect?</p>
Curator	<p>How to collect art works?</p> <p>What is the criteria for classifyng regional styles?</p> <p>How to detemine the representative works for styles?</p>
Shop owner	<p>What is the iconic feature in local area?</p> <p>What is your opinion of current development of paper cutting art?</p> <p>What is your marketing strategy?</p>

Through the research location of interviews were arranged in artists' studios (shops, home) in terms of accessibility of gathering pristine data such as work scenes and art items. After introductory talk with moderate gifts, interviews were initiated with a summary of the project and involvement interviewee would be expected to engage. The duration time of interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes and was varied according to individual instances (some artists were keen on sharing works and demonstrate specialized skills). During interviews, since participants were aware of interviewers' presence and responded purposely, verbal and non-verbal performance both were recorded by audio recorder and digital camera to ensure what actually happened in interviews [Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, pp.91-92; Berg and Lune, 2012, p.141]. The use of recorder helped the researcher to concentrate on visual cues such as unconscious behaviours that were counted for the nature of interaction and were recorded by

transcribing [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.110]. Accordingly, the measure assisted to clarify data while generating information. In attempt to create a warm interaction, discussed projects of the thesis with interviewee allowed building relationships. Purchasing artists' publications or works of art facilitated bridging connection. Aside from primary data, secondary sources like leaflet, business card and promotional poster produced limitedly were gathered unexpectedly.

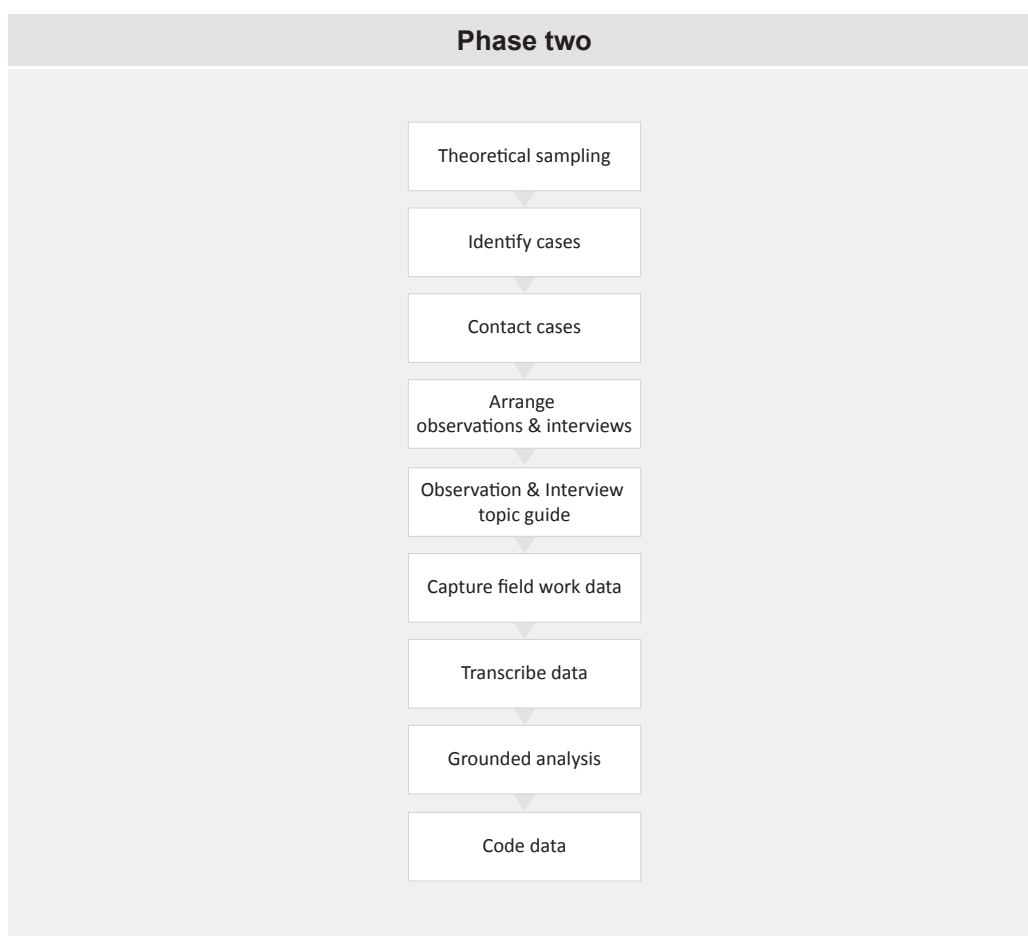


Figure 3.3 Phase two research process flow chart

The analysis of qualitative data is conducted through large volumes of assemblage of multiple sources in multiple forms [Hardy and Bryman, 2004, p.533]. The form of data of field observation contained field notes, artifact, business card, and photos, whereas the type of data

gathered from interview comprised transcripts, artifact, publications (leaflet, book), business card, photos and audio-recorded data. To begin with data analysis, audio-recorded data were rendered into a textual form by transcription [Hardy and Bryman, 2004, p.533; Liamputtong, 2011, p.165], followed by affixing codes to a set of filed notes conducted from observation and interviews. Second, marked responses and additional signals in the cases. Third, identified similarity, variables, patterns, uniqueness and regularities. Fourth, patterns and variations were distinguished from cases. Fifth, elaborated a set of generalizations [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.9].

The crucial measure utilized in grounded theory research is to arrange raw material into a group of themes or codes [Travers, 2001, p.44]. In order to organize multiple data into a set, transcription was compiled with according photos and then analyzed individually to further exploring differences within the group [Barbour, 2007, p.131]. In terms of the focus of the study was Chinese paper cutting, analyzing data involved a great deal of translation. Accordingly, it is believed that once a translation starts, an analysis commences [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.112]. During the process of transcribing data from interviews into text, the relationship between translation and originals challenged continuously in order to address accurate meaning. While constructing vocabulary and grammatical structure of the content, the attention was also paid on encounter of the case and the whole cultural background.

The vital task for field researcher to tackle is to reinterpret massive information [Herzog, 1996, p.53]. In order to condense large amount of narrative notes, analytic decisions such as what to leave in, what to highlight were made continuously. Analytically, ethnographic methods (participation in the settings) incline to descriptive [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.8]. Findings from observations including the actual scene of Chinese paper cutting street, Chinese paper cutting town, the strategy of innovation from local enterprises, the method of operating paper cutting museum were described into theory. Followed by analyzing in depth and discuss referred to thematic analysis, which aimed for identifying, analyzing and

reporting patterns within the data [Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.78; Liangputtong, 2011]. The results reflected a complex of encounters that modifies identity and behaviours. It revealed the actual development in the most renowned paper cutting web pages, the method enterprises utilized to deal with competition and the reason determined variables in paper cutting style.

Besides finding repeated patterns of meaning [Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.86], attention was drawn to minority opinions and examples that do not fit with the researcher's overall theory [Kitzinger, 1995, p.66]. Unexpected distinct views obtained from curators, artists and enterprises were addressed and discussed in the study.

Having applied the method of field observation and interviews, either strengths or limitations happened during the research. The characteristic of field observation is ecological validity that enables to testify genuine understanding of the activities. In-person interviewing allowed gaining accurate information to build up inferences efficiently. Unexpected harvest received when the interviewee was passionate to offer unrevealed stories, improvised paper cutting performance, recommendation of other artisan and academic suggestion for author. As interview is a means to educate, the exchanges from interviews brought out responses and opinion that were challenged constantly against each other's knowledge, was considered meaningful experience [Schostak, 2006, p.50]. As a result a grounded theory of reasons for variations of the style were established by conducting the comparison of archival data and primary information [Herzog, 1996, p.45].

On the other hand, limitation occurred when the planned time was not sufficient to complete the inspection; the more time of observation, the more information will accumulate. Moreover, the method of field observation was in relation to no conversation involved led to unanswered questions. Concerning human actions are substantially influenced by social and physical settings in which they encounter [Emmison and Smith, 2000, p.110; Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.53]. Hence the approach of conversational interviews with local enterprises and

curators was supplemented, which was concluded as a part of a field observation [Herzog, 1996, p.115; Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.101].

In terms of geographical (weather, location) challenges, some cases (e.g. Guangling paper cutting museum) were unable to include though had potential to the required information. When faced with interviewees were unable to participate in terms of health concern (the Zhangpu-based artist Qiuri Chen and Guangdong-based artist Yun Chai Chen) or time schedule, questions were answered by their family members or through web-based information and relative report. Additionally, it was discovered that contacting potential interviewee by telephone was more favorable than e-mails in terms of the habit of Chinese culture. Similarly, the method of telephone interviewing was not preferable comparing to face-to-face approach. As to the extent of economical concern, the considerable expense of travelling including flight tickets, taxi fare, tour consultant and accommodation was a big drawback, along with physical and mentally discomfort (including the insecurity of travelling to unfamiliar places). Furthermore, it was time-consuming to analyze volumes of different kinds of data comprising transcripts, audio recording, photos, art items and publications.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity**

The aim of the study was to explore the variations of Chinese paper cutting art in current time. In order to obtain holistic and significant perspective, the case study method was employed [Yin, 2009, p.4]. To assess validity of the research, through analysis of case-based study is regarded a feasible means [Hardy and Bryman, 2004, p.542]. With reference to Yin [2009, p.40], Miles and Huberman [1994, pp.277-279] and Guba and Lincoln [1981] that four approaches relevant to case study are used commonly to test the quality of research designs: a) construct validity, b) internal validity, c) external validity, d) reliability. The tactics were elaborated respectively in the following section.

With the intention to answer research questions (how has the content of paper cutting art changed over time, if there are any changes, what explains these changes) developed in the conceptual framework, the research initiated with collecting archival data followed by fieldworks to supplement and to seek explanation [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.108]. First, the operational set of measures was decided including defining changes in terms of specific concepts (aesthetic, political, economical, educational) and identifying cases which represent the phenomena through multiple sources of evidence (e.g. literature review, field notes, photos) then conducted a composition of key informants. In this place sources of data to be collected contained primary and secondary. Through literature review cases were determined regarding to renowned identity followed by observation and interview. When collecting data from previous studies through editorials and websites, the measures were proceed with caution to avoid bias and invalidity. To ensure the reliability, the criterion of choosing referencing documents and archival records was based on the credibility of the author in the field. According, dominant websites (e.g. official, theme network) were aimed through the process.

When choosing interviewees, the criterion lied on the credibility in many dimensions including historical, educational and aesthetic perspectives. Regarding to the prestigious historic status, Chinese paper cutting street (contains forty-one shops from different regions) and Chinese paper cutting community (60% habitant engage in the industry) in capital province (Hebei) were chosen. China paper cutting museum in Jiangsu province (set by government) and Hua-Xia paper cutting museum in Hunan province (set by scholar) were selected in terms of educational contribution in the field. The China museum is regarded the first constitution held by Chinese government whereas Hua-Xia museum established by the scholar is considered the first paper cutting museum in China. On the other hand, when searching for innovative point of view from regional artists, target interviewees were based on the list of award of paper cutting representative published by highly regarded authorities. When faced with the representative not able to participant in terms of health concern, family

members were considered the substitute candidates. In this case, Quanzhou-based artist Li Fong Huang, the granddaughter of the master Yao Bao Lee (1892.11-1983.3), provided detailed story of belonged style. Besides referencing government award document, interviews with four Fujian-based artists were recommended and arranged by local culture minister.

Second, building explanation for research questions to make inferences by conducting content and visual analysis. The content of gathered data comprising: a) personal notes and instructions; b) confidential reports like journal paper; c) public reports, including newspaper, leaflet and autobiographies; d) government regulations and policy; e) records of verbal and nonverbal interaction with participants; f) artifacts, was guided by Marshall and Rossman [2006, p.119]. According to Marshall and Rossman [2006, p.119] that historical analysis enables obtaining knowledge of unexamined area and undefined questions and allows systematic and direct classification of data. Therefore through study of historical inferences, a theoretical gap was discovered that the methods of classifying regional styles seem to be bias. As a result, a new classification of paper cutting styles was generated through analysis of various dimensions including proposed theory, methods of classification used by theme museums and government. The measure of referencing document from highly regarded authority was underpinned by Altheide and Johnson [1994] that political scheme, social development and changes of social reality empowered the validity. Accordingly, the result was validated theoretical and authoritative.

Aside from archival analysis, Hardy and Bryman [2004, p.542] suggested that 'Quality of fieldwork' attempts to validate the adequacy of an analysis by reference to factors such as the extent of fieldwork, the rapport achieved with participants, the effort devoted to coding, the proportion of data accounted for by the most prominent analytic themes. In the study, in order to gather variables in areas, fieldworks were spanned of the north and the south. The method of interviewing of elites ensured the value of the information since interviewees were selected based on their expertise in the area [Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.105]. In this case

renowned historical sites (Chinese paper cutting street, Chinese paper cutting town in Hebei province), two local paper cutting shops (Hebei), two paper cutting museums (the first paper cutting museum and the first official one) and five representatives in Fujian (symbol the south style) [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.34] were targets for observing and interviewing. With the intention of searching explanations for variables of the art, data analysis was initiated with interpretation (translation, structure) with a comprehensive ecological view of Chinese cultural and guided with courtesy and respect for individuals, followed by discussion to reflect critical insights [Sieber, 1992, p.18].

The third test is relating to whether the findings of the study were transferable to other inferences [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.279]. In accordance with the query the study assessed the value of the outcome of cases by matching empirical information to theoretical speculations, and the results directed to build logic inference and recommendations for further study [Yin, 2009, p.149]. The research design was focus on exploring variables of paper cutting art in China, hence the scope of the study was within the area. To begin the investigation, the sampling was theoretically diverse in order to obtain holistic view comprised historical sites, theme museums, local shops and art representatives. Description of finding of each case was conducted by generating data from audio recorder and photos and then permitted comparisons to other samples. In order to display differentiations clearly, the method of comparison was employed commonly. For instance, two paper cutting museums were discussed in terms of the private and official organizers. The reason for variables in the north and the south was not only because of the geography but also local habit. In analytical generalization, the findings were to connect to prior theory [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.279]. In this case the development of the most renowned historic site was discovered not as much dynamic as reported, challenged to generalizability. Through fieldworks inadequacy of method of classifying regional styles was found and resulted in a holistic version of classification system. As to the contributions to suggestions for further involvement, the findings exemplified strategies enterprises used to manage the business may benefit to



relevant participants. The exploration of innovative concepts that artists implemented demonstrated new leads for invention of traditional art.

To examine the reliability of the research is to conduct as many steps as operational as possible [Yin, 2009, p.45]. First of all, the study was initiated with the study of archival data followed by a conceptual framework. Second, central research questions were determined to seek explanation for hypothetical and theoretical predictions (discussed in Chapter 3.2). The research questions: a) what are styles of paper cutting art typify the regions in China, b) what explains the variations in paper cutting styles, underlined hypothesis and implication of potential multiple respondents. Third, decisions made as to the method to conduct empirical work including choice of indicators, sampling, tactics of data collection (observation, interview) (discussed in Chapter 3.4, 3.5, 3.6). In order to obtain holistic and embedded views, multiple-case studies were involved comprising a full range of appropriate settings and respondents suggested by archival data and research questions [Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.278; Yin, 2009, p.59]. Fourth, gathering data while doing fieldwork. Tools for collecting data included audio recorder, notebook and digital camera. Accordingly, types of gathered data were transcripts, photos, leaflets, business cards, publications and art items. Fifth, data processing and analysis through strategies and interpretation and establish grounded theory (discussed in Chapter 3.5, 3.6). It is believed that interview material processes valid inferences for theoretical concepts [Yin, 2009, p.61]. The findings of explanation of variation for styles showed considerable parallelism with previous studies. The results were then revised through explanatory and theoretical statement.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has sought to provide a detailed explanation of the research methodology and associated research procedures adopted in this study. To supplement this explanation, an effort was made to schematically illustrate the overall framework of the study, and the connected relationships between the different research stages of the process.

The proposed qualitative research methods, consisting of two data collection and data analysis stages will, characteristically, be depicted in words and graphs rather than in numbers and figures [Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990; Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 2003, p.199]. The initial method of data collection was from secondary sources, consisting of previously published research, which was subjected to a visual analysis, resulting in the development of a tentative classification table. The researcher acknowledged that this initial stage of the analysis was grounded upon personal interpretation, and therefore raised issues of reliability and validity. In addressing these two important issues, an attempt will be made to provide greater trustworthiness of the investigator's interpretations before the second stage of the research is undertaken.

The second stage of the research consisted of data collection, primarily using the observation and interview method. Observation involved with historical sites, paper cutting shops and museums and spanned in three provinces. Interviews were arranged with the curators of museums and awarded regional representatives in order to explore the variations of paper cutting art and the explanation for the changes.

Through systematic analysis (content and visual) of case study, the grounded theory was established. This description of the research methods was elaborated and examined with according theory respectively within each section. Through the study, it is clear from the findings of the literature review and empirical data that the system of classifying regional paper-cutting styles appeared inadequate, though there have been several theories discussed of how to define categories. Therefore this research seeks to provide an original contribution to this field by analyzing and generating both theoretical and pragmatic inferences. As a result a new classification was developed. In addition, through the investigation of fieldwork, the variation of paper cutting art has been discovered and discussed in the study. Findings are expected to provide framework to other relevant practitioners.

## **4 The classification of paper cutting art in China**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In China, diverse cultures have developed due to the large geographic area the country consists of and the variations across the geographic regions. As a result the difference between regional lifestyles has encouraged the cultivation unique art forms. Paper cutting is one example of a cultural art form that has been generating into various styles. The common belief of distinguishing between different styles is by geography, for instance, differentiation between styles in north and south China. Accordingly, this simple way of selection is evident within previous studies [Jiang, 2009, p.21]. However, this kind of classification seems insufficient for the notable variation of paper cutting across China; the traditional art presents diversification within and between provinces and has continued evolving in modern times. Meanwhile, different versions of classification are practiced from both pragmatic and theoretic perspectives by organisations and scholars. Considering this variation within the field and the lack of systematic and holistic study, further investigation is worthwhile. Also, much of the research to date has tended to focus on each individual region's performance in the art rather than an overarching examination of paper cutting art across China.

The emphasis in this chapter lies on classification; the research involves an investigating of the systems used in previous research, and those employed by government authorities and paper cutting craft museums. This chapter aims to examine and justifying the difference in paper cutting styles in China and present a comprehensive system of classification.

### **4.2 Discussion into previous studies**

Folk paper cutting is developed gradually by people's customs and daily experience. The style of paper cutting craft correlates closely with regional culture, habit, history, economic, craft men's acknowledgement, preference as well as religious belief and ancient pattern worship [Zhang, 2005, p.63]. Also, the structure of applicant object, tool and material

used in production determine the design [Wang, 2010, p.35]. A research into previous study of paper cutting classification provides academic thinking as well as theoretic support. Through scholars' and professionals' points of views, different types of criterion for distinguishing art styles may contribute to a new category. The chapter discovers methods that have been proposed in recent.

Different versions of classification of paper cutting styles have been proposed in previous studies. Each style stands out in terms of uniqueness in specialist area, for instance, colouring method, special material, traditional pattern and cutting technique. Generally speaking, an apparent approach of distinguishing an art style in a country is by geographic term. The style of Chinese paper cutting is commonly divided into two schools, north and south [Ian and She, 2009, p.7; Rong, 2010, p.331]. North style is considered to be bold whereas south is relatively delicate [Yu, 2007, p.7; Wang, 2010, p.35]. Hebei Province (Yu County), Shanxi Province (Guangling), Shaanxi Province, Shandong Province are classified into north school, while south style comprises Guangdong, Guangxi and Fujian Province. On the other hand, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Hunan, Hubei, Sichuan province are classified into middle area style. In this place north style is regarded comprising both north and middle area style [Jiang, 2009, p.21; Friend of Science Amateurs, 2010, p.12; China.com, 2011].

There are apparent differences between north and south styles. In this place, factors like personality of the artist, adoration of nature, local material and special cutting skills, all of which determine distinguish style [Sun and Ji, 2010, pp.104-105]. Bold line style is regarded identical feature in north style while south style presents thin lines in general, which may be influenced by vigorous development of carving craft [He, 2004, p.18; Jiang, 2009, p.21]. Compare to the majority of female artists in the north, male are the major participants in the south to execute mass production to the market. It is discovered that engraving skill is mainly used in south style whereas north style is predominately accomplished by scissors. As to content design, north style mainly illustrates cultural patterns while south style depicts more about current incident [He, 2005, pp.75-76]. Furthermore, it is discovered that different

materials are produced and experienced more in the south. Besides, variances happen in the type of products. He [2005, p.51] indicates that home decoration is mainly adopted in north area while gift design is implemented massively in the south.

It is discovered that the method of classifying regional paper cutting styles in China by geographic features appears substantially in early research may due to mass scale of continent as well as numerous nationalities. In China, the Yellow River and the Changjiang River are regarded as two main streams across north and south sections both cultivate cultural heritage, as shown in Figure 4.1. Accordingly, from the view of cultural significance, the Changjiang River is regarded to distinguish north and south area [Zhu, 2010, p.20]. In this place north style includes Shaanxi, Shanxi, Shandong, Hebei; south style comprises Jiangsu (Xuzhou, Yangzhou, Nantong, Nanjing), Fujian, Guangdong, Hunan, Yunnan. Similarly, He [2004, p.18] points that styles happen near the Yellow River are considered to be north style while south style refers to those develop close to the Changjiang River.

It is suggested that provinces above of the Yellow River are at edge of the board presents a blend of ethic cultures whereas areas that the Yellow River passes through implicate the popularity of worship of natural god, traditional patterns and legendary story [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.85; Sun and Ji, 2010, p.105; Shu, 2005, p.8]. Also, Zhou [1992, p.156] indicates that art images in Yellow River basin express wishes for giving birth. Ying [2010, p.126] mentioned that patterns developed in the Yellow River area are tend to be masculine and simplified while feminine and intricate styles appear more in the south, which may due to diverse tribes, people's character and cultures.

Sun and Ji [2010, p.103] proposed that paper cutting art in the Yellow River area starts from agricultural society by farming family and mainly produced by women. The art is used to pray luck for newborn babies and evolves to a means of conveying beliefs [Sun and Ji and Li, 2008, p.71]. Attempting to inspire people's imagination, the style tends to achieve resemblance rather than reality; pursuing simplicity rather than complexity [Sun and Ji and Li,

2008, p.72]. The content design is influenced by natural surroundings, cultural heritage, historical background and social network. Symbols that contain auspicious implication are employed to express spiritual belief as well as life philosophy. High contrast of colour arrangement is used to show optimistic character and blessing wishes.

According to He [2005, p.75] that costume design has a great impact on paper cutting styles that are close to the Changjiang River. Embroidery designs created by Mao Nationality is considered as renowned signature in this area which facilitate development of paper cutting art in terms of resemble technique. Also, local habit of wearing embroidery products helps keeping the art alive. In addition, it is interesting to mention that paper cutting technique has been applied to ceramics and result in influencing Mexico's paper cutting style through oversea trading [He, 2005, p.75]. Additionally, Wang [2010, p.55] indicates that the art in Huai River area (Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan, Anhui Province) processes profound cultural heritage.

In order to distinguish styles explicit, different perspectives of method may be combined. Zhang [2005, p.64] points the extreme of national and regional features as shown in Figure 4.2: Yueching style specialises in thin lines (Zhejiang Province); Foshan style made in copper (Guangdong Province); Dai nationality style for Buddhist service (Yunnan Province); wizard doll style (Shaanxi Province); Man Nationality style in northeast and pointed colouring style in Yu County (Hebei Province). The criteria of choosing worth mentioning style is according to the popularity of the art in local area, renown aesthetic feature in nations and the world, regional materials used into production, application of ancient cultural patterns and symbols. Meanwhile, Shu [2005, pp.8-11] proposes a classification based on geographic features and distinguished aesthetic characters, which classifies styles into sections including Yellow River (Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Henan, Gansu, Shandong Province), West-South (Hubei, Hunan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan Province), North (Hebei Province), East-North (Jilin, Heilongjiang Province), Huai River and Changjiang River (Anhui, Jiangsu Province), South

(Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong Province) as shown in Figure 4.3 and Table 4.2. In this case local representatives and identical features are pointed individually.

Besides the geographic classification, the president of Chinese national culture committee, Shu Shen Zhang, proposed in 2005 that the style is divided into four coordinates (east, west, south, north) based on Chinese traditional goodness worship traced back to Han Dynasty: Dragon god in the east, Tiger god in the west, Sparrow god in the south and Turtle-snake god in the north, as illustrated in Figure 4.4. It is discovered that the idea of four directions is commonly used for paper cutting composition. Thus, the style is classified accordingly, which are the east river side, the northwest plateau area, minority nationality in the southwest, the northeast plain and the middle area [Zhang, 2005, p.63]. Apart from the big picture of categorising, Zhang also addressed distinguished styles present the extreme of national and regional features: Yueching style in thin lines (Zhejiang Province), Foshan style made in copper (Guangdong Province), Dai nationality style for Buddhist service (Yunnan Province), wizard doll style (Shaanxi Province), Man Nationality style in northeast and pointed colouring style in Yu County (Hebei Province). The criteria of choosing worth mentioning style is according to the popularity of the art in local area, renown aesthetic feature in nations and the world, regional materials used into production, application of ancient cultural patterns and symbols.

On the other hand, it seems that paper cutting styles are categorised by other method except geographic features. Characteristics like form of art, application, technique and content design attribute to the method of classifying styles. Rong [2010, p.331] discussed regional styles in the scope of seven main stream of Chinese paper cutting comprising Yu County (Hebei province), Guangling (Shanxi province), Shandong, Shaanxi, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong regarding to previous study. Rong pointed that the form of 'Window flower' appears substantially in the north area including Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei and Shandong province. Patterns for embroidery are emphasised by the south section such as Zhejiang, Guangdong, Fujian province. In the aspect of technique, artists in Shaanxi, Shanxi, Shandong

utilise scissors as the main tool for creation whereas most of works from Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang and Hebei style are made by curving knife. In this case Yangzhou style is an exceptional example that masters both scissors and knife proficiently. In relation to content design, styles like Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang are inclined to illustrate animal and botany. Bird, in particular, is commonly articulated to signal happiness based on cultural significance. It is interesting to note that local resources affect the trend of design. For instance, imagery of cuttlefish and lobster are depicted in Guangdong and Fujian province where are at seafront cultivating prosperous fishing industry [Wang, 2007, p.65]. Additionally, Yu County style (Hebei province) specialises in opera characters influenced by popularity of opera shows in local area, is considered a distinct example in the field.

The method of classification proposed in previous study is according to broad dimensions such as historical background, geography, cultural significance, stylist feature, technique and application. The discussion brought up in this chapter involved with a range of artistic genres helps to integrate concepts of classifying styles of an art and to facilitate a new version of holistic approach.

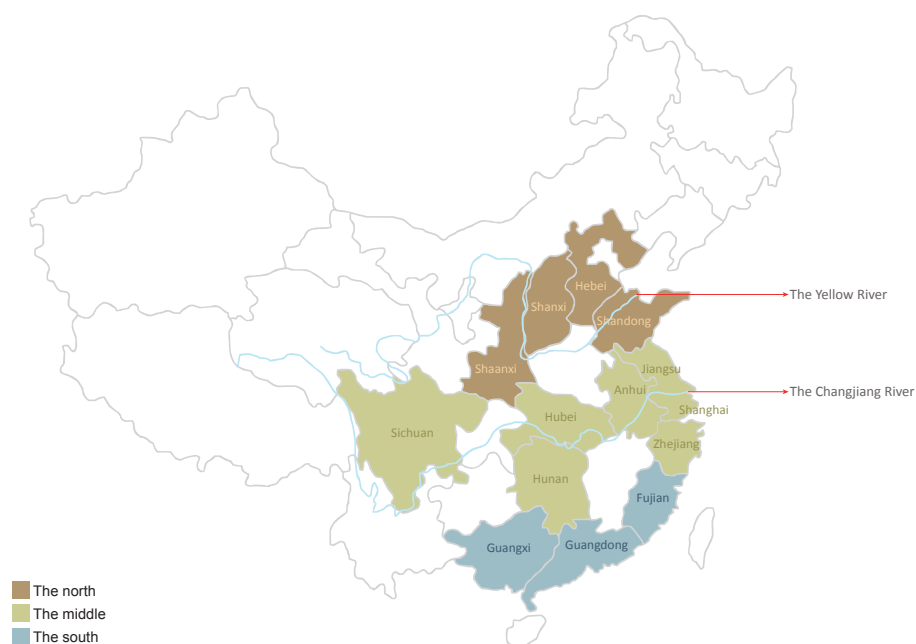


Figure 4.1 Classification based on geography derived from Zhu [2010, p.20], He [2004, p.18]



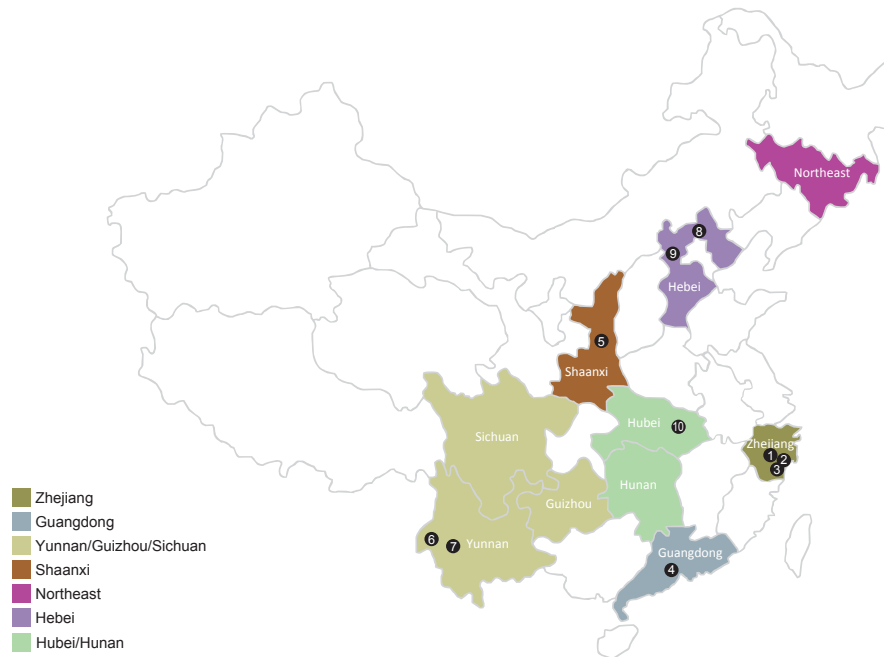


Figure 4.2 Classification based on aesthetic features derived from Zhang [2005]

Table 4.1 Classification based on aesthetic features derived from Zhang [2005]

Province	Code	Style	Unique art feature	
Zhejiang	1	Yongkang	Opera figures	
	2	Yueching	Thin line/ Pattern for lantern design	
	3	Wenzhou	Pattern for fabric printing	
Guangdong	4	Foshan	Application: Decoration for religious articles/ Embroidery on costume/Pattern for pottery and carving craft/ Decoration for celebration Material: Copper	
Shaanxi	5	Huangling	Traditional pattern/Without being influenced by commercial demand/Abstract, authentic, metaphor style/Wizard symbol	
Yunnan	6	Dehong	Embroidery (Bai, Yi, Naxi Nationality)/ Religious use (Dai Nationality)	Religious articles/Subject depicted: temple, peacock, elephant, deer, lotus)
	7	Lincang		Series of paper cuttings/ Subject depicted: Buddhist story

Sichuan			In twentieth century the style has changed from folk art to sophisticated collection.	
Guizhou				
Northeast			Man Nationality/White symbols auspicious; red stands for danger/ Subject depicted: legendary story, natural scenery/ worship of religion/ Three dimensional style	
Hebei	8	Fengning	Singular colour adopted/ Home decoration	
	9	Yu County	Carving and colouring technique	
Hubei	10	Xiaogan	The midstream of the Changjiang River	Influenced by other art forms (carving craft, painting, embroidery, fabric dying and printing, shadow show)
Hunan				

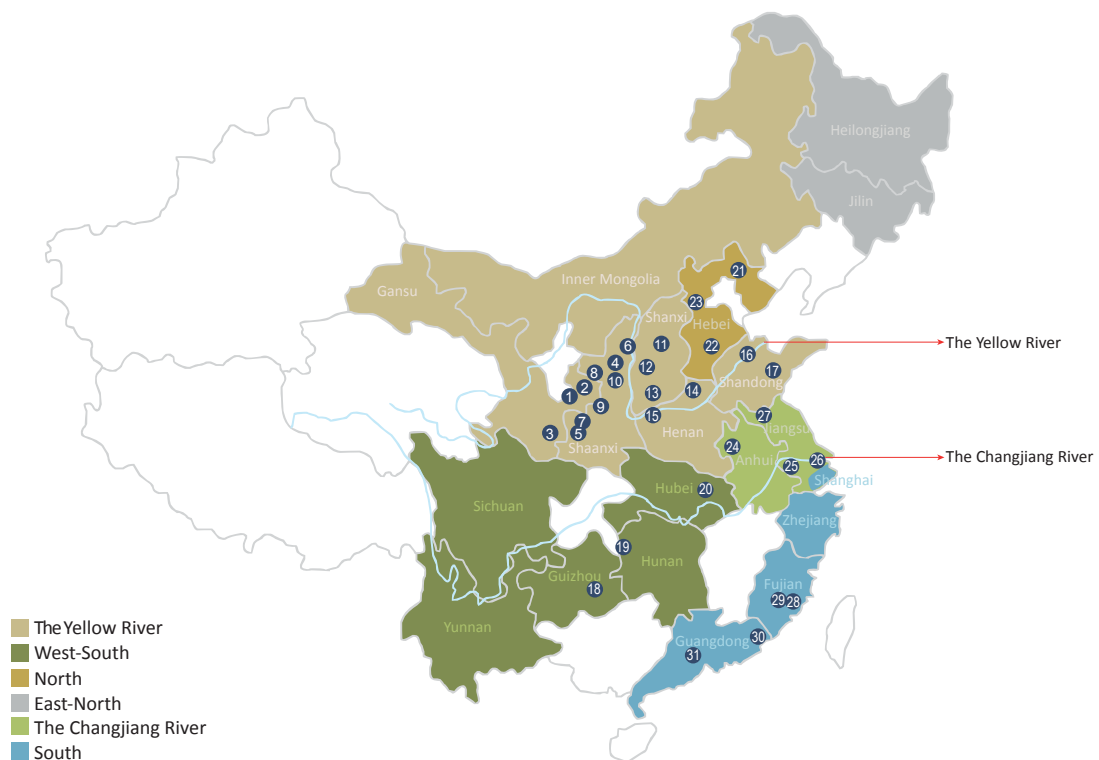


Figure 4.3 Classification based on geography and unique features derived from Shu [2005, pp.8-11]

Table 4.2 Classification based on geography and unique features derived from Shu [2005, pp.8-11]

Section	Province	Code	Style	Unique art feature	Representative
The Yellow River	Gansu	1	Pinliang	Simple style	Tao E, Liu/Yu
		2	Qingyang	Ancient traditional pattern	Ming, Cheng/
		3	Xifong	Delicate, magnificent style	Sho Mei, Du
	Inner Mongolia			Traditional patterns (snake circulates rabbit)	Chun Xia, Han
	Shaanxi	4	Ansai	Single coloured paper/ Scissor/ Abstract style	Gai Ching, Lee/ Yu Je, Zhang/ Xua E, Chin
		5	Baojing	Dyed colouring technique (red/green/yellow)	
		6	Jiaxian		
		7	Qianyang		
		8	Wuchi	Hollowing cutting technique/	
		9	Xunyi	Coloured paper	
		10	Yanan		
		10	Yanan		
	Shanxi	11	Chungyang	Simple composition/	Hui, Lv
		12	Fushang	Exaggerate lines/ Coloured	
		13	Jinle	paper (red/yellow/blue/green)	
	Henan	14	Anyang	Pointed painting skill	
		15	Linbao	(yellow/green/rose red)/Symmetry	
	Shandong	16	Binzhou	Sharp teeth pattern/ Single	Zuo Xin, Fan
		17	Kaomi	coloured/ Outline detail	
West-South	Yunnan			Local scenery (elephant/temple)/Auspicious, authentic, mysterious, religious pattern	
	Sichuan			Style is wild in the north and	

				simple in the south		
	Guizhou	18	Taijiang	Miao Nationality/ Embroidery on costume design		
	Hunan	19	Fonghuang	Carving skill/Cut dozen of paper once		Du Hua, She
	Hubei	20	Xiaogan			
The North	Hebei	21	Chengde	Opera figures/Carving skill/ Colouring technique/ High contrast		Jao Ming, Chou/ Lao Shang, Wang/Yong Ming, Chou/Zhao Ming, Chou
		22	Wuqiang			
		23	Yu County			
East-North	Heilongjiang			Man Nationality/Natural scenery/ Coloured paper		
	Jilin					
The Changjiang River	Anhui	24	Fuyang	Decoration for celebration/ Embroidery on costume/ Door label		
	Jiangsu	25	Nanjiang	Historical story, folk legend,	Circled, floral design	
		26	Nantong	auspicious pattern,	Rigorous composition	
		27	Yangzhou	botany/Coloured paper (gold/red, peach, green, blue, orange, yellow, black)	Delicate style	
The South	Shanghai			Window flower/		
	Zhejiang			Lantern flower/		
	Fujian		North	celebrated	Bold imagery,	

				flower/ embroidery/	authentic style	
		28	Putang	Building/	Magnificent,	
		29	Shanyo	furniture/Opera	delicate style	
	Guangdong	30	Chaozhou	scenery, botany, insect	Decoration for gift and daily articles	
		31	Foshan		Carving skill/ Metal material: cooper, gold,tin foil/ Coloured paper	

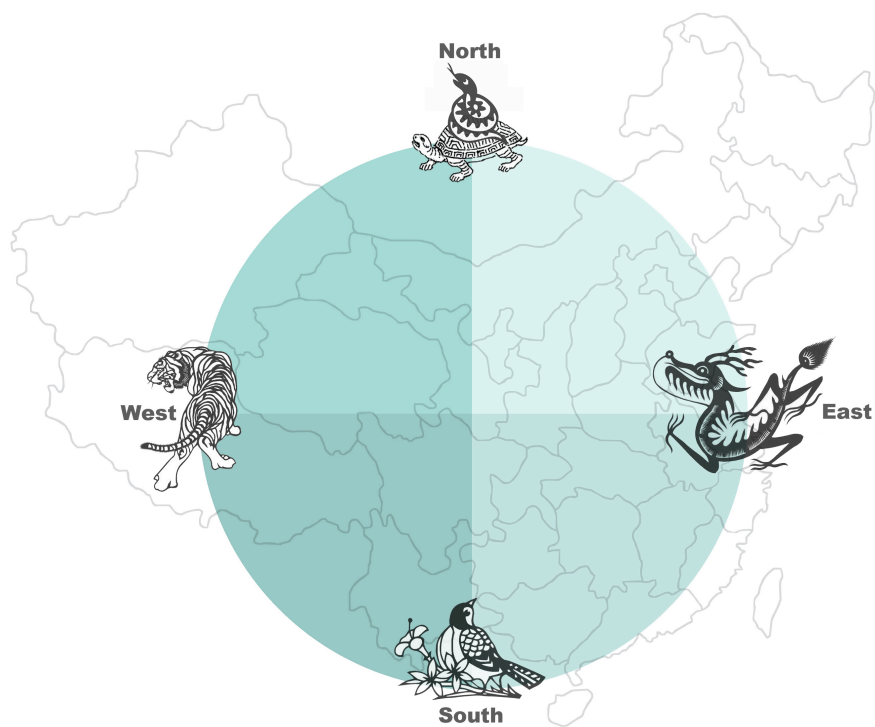


Figure 4.4 Classification based on four symbols of the traditional Chinese constellations derived from Zhang [2005]

### **4.3 Criteria used for authorities**

In recent years, Chinese government makes effort on protecting and developing cultural heritage. In order to encourage traditional culture and art, relevant laws and awards are composed to put protecting schemes in practice. Attempting to obtain an authoritative version of classification of paper cutting style, investigation takes part in the method used by Chinese government. In this place relative awards address recognizable styles and artists. The following chapter aim to discover the process of electing worth mentioning styles and representatives. About information is derived from government official website. Explicit table is provided to comprehend the knowledge.

#### **4.3.1 Township of Chinese folk culture and art**

In 1997, regulations on protection of traditional arts and crafts are formulated as well as activated. During the period of 1987 and 2003, Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China has awarded 486 regions as "Township of Chinese Folk art" and "Township of Chinese Distinct Art". The first awarding list revealed in 1993 whereas the latest announced in 2011. The purpose of awarding is to facilitate cultural movement as well as economic growth and arouses cultural consciousness. In 2008, Ministry of Culture renamed the award as "Township of Chinese folk culture and art" and 963 administrative units have been honoured. The definition of the identification is that a certain art form through innovation, has an influential impact on people's cultural and economic life and is regarded a mainstream in local area. The category of the award contains performing art, folk art, folk craft and traditional activity. Referring to the declaration of the award, paper cutting is classified into folk art area [MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2011].

Accordingly, a committee is formed in 2011 by the Ministry of Culture to verify the justification of the award. The selection begins with applications from administrative government (province, city) followed by examining and investigating by members of committee. Judges are experts in fields of national folk culture, cultural industry and public

cultural service. The criterion is concentrated on the value of art feature, cultural standard of local government and the popularity in the society. The winnings are honoured with medals of confirmations in a ceremony along with financial support [MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2011].

#### **4.3.2 The Intangible Cultural Heritage in China**

After the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (a committee of about 150 members of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China) agreed to participate in Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage conducted by UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 2003, the government started working on protecting Chinese folklore. The idea of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) appeared in the 1990s, dominant directs to non-physical heritage and folklore [Smith and Akagawa, 2009, p.210]. According to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, ICH is defined as the humanity's cultural diversity with the requirements of mutual respect and continuing development [Wikipedia, 2011]. Regarding to the category of Intangible Cultural Heritage made by UNESCO, which includes traditional language, performing art, social habit and ceremony, natural knowledge, and traditional art [twh.hach.gov.tw, 2007-2010], Chinese government documented according list in 2006 including folk literature, traditional music, traditional dancing, traditional opera, oral performance, traditional acrobatic and game, traditional art, traditional craft, traditional medication and folk habit. Referring to the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in China, paper cutting craft is classified into the field of traditional art coding as no. 315, VII-16 [The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2006].

The file is renewed every two years in order to implement protection of authentic folk arts elaborately. The first version of category is revealed in 2006 with 518 subjects documented, followed by second volume in 2008 and third version in 2011 [The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2008; The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2011]. According to the law of protecting national intangible

cultural heritage passed by Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China in 2006, the method of selecting representative cultural heritage is by voluntary recommendation from local authorities, followed by examination by specialists engaged by the department of the State Council in charge of the work of protection of traditional arts. Confirmation and identification will be made according to conclusion of the assessments and investigation. Any administrative unit wishes to win the identification is required to possess comprehensive information about representatives, capacity for implementing protecting schemes as well as providing sufficient space to exhibit. In addition, applicants are expected to fulfil duties like collecting and recording actual item and document; supporting requirement for relevant activities; protecting cultural sites; managing exhibition proactively; reporting progress to local government and being supervised [The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2006]. The idea that applicant is responsible for protecting heritage corresponding with the concept proposed by a British scholar, Kenneth Hudson, the most prominent specialist on the European museum scene, "Once the museum starts to exhibit collections to scholars and general public, holding duty of protection becomes inevitable" [Ting, 1987, p.81].

Meanwhile, determining to achieve the goal of preserving national cultural heritage, encouraging associated artists is considered efficient to accelerate the idea. In 2007, representatives for national intangible cultural heritage are awarded by Ministry of Culture. Aiming to stimulate and support cultural inheritance in long-term perspective, the category is updated regularly [chinalawedu.com, 2007].

Similar to national intangible cultural heritage, the election of representatives for national intangible cultural heritage involves with report by local participants and evaluation by cultural committee. Referring to the law of protecting national intangible cultural heritage, applicants are anticipated possessing professional skills, influential state in the field and pass down the tradition to generation constantly [The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2008].



In China, it is competitive to win attention though styles may be valuable to be noticed, since the country consists of numerous regions as well as diverse culture. The measure of awarding cultural heritage adopted by government offers the opportunity for participants. Awarded units (styles) are inclined to gain economic benefit in terms of prestige. In order to reach winning standard to obtain governmental support, applicants appear to take part in relative activity proactively. As a result, the development is optimistic because of increasing participation by people. The criterion of justification for such awards is based on if applicants have capacity of managing administrative schemes. In this place applicants are not only required distinct art feature but also likely to be above county level in terms of sufficient power to execute plans. Furthermore, the popularity (including artistic and economic) of the craft in local area is another factor to be evaluated. Attempting to obtain worth mentioning paper cutting styles that are proved by government, awarded regions are listed in Figure 4.5 and Table 4.3.

It is worth mentioning that some regions (e.g. Tibet, Guangxi and Taiwan,) are not inclusive in the category in terms of political reason, as a result the development of paper cutting art is unable to be evaluated. In this case the implementation of classification system adopted by government emerges inadequacy.



Figure 4.5 Classification according to regions awarded for paper cutting heritage

Table 4.3 Classification according to regions awarded for paper cutting heritage

Category	Code	Township of Chinese folk art (paper cutting) (1993)	Township of Chinese folk culture and art (paper cutting)(2011-2013)	National Intangible cultural heritage (paper cutting) (2006-2008)	Representatives for National Intangible cultural heritage (paper cutting) (2007-2009)
Provinces					
Heilongjiang	1	Fangzheng County	Fangzheng County (2011)	Fangzheng County (2008)	Sho Mei, Nee (2009)

	2	Hailun City			
	3		Ian County (2011)		
	4		Linden County (Man Nationality) (2011)		
	5		Mishan City (2011)		
Jilin	6		Dongliao County (2011)	Changbai Mountain in Dongliao County (Man nationality) (2008)	
	7		Shuangyang (2011)		
Liaoning	8		Jianping County (2011)	Jianping County (2008)	
	9			Jinzhou City (2006)	Chi Kuo, Chao (2007)
	10			Xinbin (Man nationality) County (2008)	
	11			Xiuyan (Man nationality) County (2008)	
	12			Yiwulv Mountain (Man nationality) (2006)	Sho Xia, Wan (2007)

	13			Zhuanghe City (2008)	
Inner Mongolia	14		Heilingeer County (2011)	Heilingeer County (2008)	
Gansu	15			Qingyang (2008)	
Xinjiang	16		Hami		
Hebei	17	Fengning	Fengning (2011)	Fengning (2006)	Dong Ger, Zhang (2007)
	18	Yu County	Yu County (2011)	Yu County (2006)	Jao Ming, Chou (2007)
Shanxi	19	Chungyang County	Chungyang City (2011)	Chungyang City (2006)	Ji Ru, Wang (2007)
	20	Fushan County			
	21			Guangling County (2008)	
Shaanxi	22	Ansai County	Ansai County (2011)	Ansai County (2006)	Jin Ai, Kao/Sho Fan, Lee (2007)
	23	Dingbian County			
	24	Luochuan County			
	25		Suide County (2011)		

	26	Xunyi County	Xunyi County (2011)		
	27		Yanchuan County (2011)		
Ningxia	28		Haiyuan County (2011)		
Shandong	29			Binzhou City (2008)	
	30	Chiping County			
	31			Ju County (2008)	
	32	Kaomi City		Kaomi City (2008)	Zuo Xin, Fan (2009)
	33		Rongcheng City (2011)		
	34			Yantai City (2008)	Shu Ron, Yi (2009)
Henan	35			Hui County (2008)	
	36			Lingbao City (2008)	Peng Cao, Wang (2013)
	37			Lushi County (2008)	Chun Zhi, Yang (2009)
Jiangsu	38		Jintan City (2011)	Jintan City (2008)	Jao Chun, Yan (2009)
	39			Nanjing City (2008)	Fan Lin, Zhang (2009)
	40			Yangzhou City (2006)	Sho Fun, Zhang (2007)

	41	Xuzhou (Pizhou City, Pei County)	Xuzhou (Pizhou City)(2011)	Xuzhou City (2008)	Qui Yi, Wang (2009)
Shanghai City	42		Xuhui City (2011)	Xuhui City (2008)	
	43		Zhuanqiao Town (2011)		
Anhui	44			Fuyang City (2008)	
Hubei	45			Ezhou City (2008)	Chia Chun, Zhang (2009)
	46		Xiantao City (2011)	Xiantao City (2008)	Jin Shan, Hu (2009)
	47			Xiaogan City (2008)	
Sichuan	48	Yilong County			
Zhejiang	49	Pujiang County		Pujiang County (2008)	Shan Zen, Wu (2009)
	<b>50</b>			Yueching City (2006)	Ban Dong, Lin/ Yu Hua, Chen (2007)
Jiangxi	51	Ruichang	Ruichang City (2011)	Ruichang City (2008)	Shi Ying, Liu

		City			(2009)
Hunan	52		Tahu village in Luxi County (2011)	Tahu village in Luxi County (2008)	Shin Long, Zheng (2009)
Guizhou	53			Maio nationality (2008)	
Yunnan	54			Mang City (Dai nationality) (2006)	Hua Chun, Si (2007)
Fujian	55		Pucheng County (2011)		
	56			Quanzhou City (Long Bau, Lee) (2008)	Long Bau, Lee (2008)
	57	Zhangpu County	Zhangpu County (2011)	Zhangpu County (2008)	Qiuri, Chen (2009)
	58		Zherong County (2011)	Zherong County (2008)	Sho Yin, Yuan (2009)
Guangdong	59			Chaozhou City (2006)	
	60			Foshan City (2006)	Yun Chai, Chen (2009)
	61			Shangto City (2006)	
Hainan	62	Ledong Li nationality	Ledong Li nationality (2011)		

#### **4.4 Museum classification system**

It is believed that museum is a crucial constitution that conducts culture preservation and communication [Ju, 2002, p.11]. A museum sustains great responsibility for conveying local history and culture to society [Wu, 2011]. The aim of this section is to assess pragmatic use of classification, thus visiting paper cutting museums seems to be a feasible approach. Also, in-depth interviewing enhances validity of the story [Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.422]. In China, paper cutting museums are designed into two forms, private and official. In the following chapter two museums have been chosen to investigate which are China paper cutting museum in Yangzhou (the official site) and Hua-Xia paper cutting museum in Hunan (the private organisation). Discussion comprises introduction and analysis of classification. Elaborated information is provided in Chapter four.

##### **4.4.1 China paper cutting museum**



Figure 4.6 Illustration of Chinese province. Red section indicates Jiangsu province

China paper cutting museum is regarded as first paper cutting museum held by China government. In terms of sufficient support, every art piece is framed and displayed in open space. There are three show rooms designed to exhibit as well as educate the knowledge of the art. Works displayed in gallery one are gathered from famous artists who are Yangzhou-based resulting from easy access. To introduce different paper cutting styles, regional works are shown in gallery two. The exhibition commences with a China map with highlighted provinces (styles) followed by a series of examples of each style, as illustrated in



Figure 4.7. In this case distinguished styles are pointed in the map but not all of which are introduced by examples. Representative works are chosen from competition winnings and are donated by competition organizers, Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society established in Beijing in 1950, is conducted by renowned artists and professionals from different subject areas including literature, research, translation, education and publication [Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society, 2001-2008]. The organisation endeavours preserving Chinese culture, and holds regular activities such as exhibition and competition to stimulate people's interests.

The classification adopted in China paper cutting museum is determined by recognisable organisation, Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society. Although acknowledged result of competition contributes to the introduction of regional paper cutting styles, winning examples may not be qualified to symbol local identity. Also, some styles are neglected when no candidates of certain area participate in the competition.



Figure 4.7 Gallery No.2- Regional paper cutting works

#### 4.4.2 Hua-Xia paper cutting museum



Figure 4.8 Illustration of Chinese province. Red section indicates Hunan province

Hua-Xia paper cutting museum is held initially with personal interest and gradually becomes recognisable nationwide. The museum is a three-floor building, also the place to live. Shih Jia, Chin, a scholar, artist, the curator and funder of the museum, dedicates his life for creating and preserving this traditional art. The criterion of selecting art pieces is based on curator's own professional knowledge. The measure of categorising data is by provinces and renowned artists. Example of each style comes from travelling or individual artists who seek opinion from the curator. In this case, in terms of updating database continuously, more than one example is showed for one style. From this measure it is clear to notice that diverse types have been developed within one region and the evolution of certain style. In terms of insufficient room to exhibit, not all of pieces are shown in the open space. In this case regional works are kept in wooden drawers not only in the cause of a great deal of collection but also preventing from dust and sun, as shown in Figure 4.9. The name of style (province or city) or artist is labelled on each drawer. Also, to deal with different scale of works, small size of works are pasted on cards restoring in boxes while lager ones are scrolled, putting on the floor, or framed on the wall.

The method of classifying regional paper cutting styles is regarding to curator's knowledge of the field. In terms of curator's passion towards the art, the museum is capable of showcasing diversified collection. However, it is difficult to understand the sea of works in terms of lacking systematic way such as coding. As a result, when searching data in the museum, rely

only on curator's memory. However, the private based museum may not be able to run continuously if no family member is willing to take over.



Figure 4.9 Methods of managing paper cutting works

Through investigation and interviews, differences between China paper cutting museum and Hua-Xia paper cutting museum are shown in Table 4.4. The emphasis of this chapter lies on the method of classification along with the method of gathering works. In knowing the method of classification adopted by selected museums, variation starts when collecting art works. China paper cutting museum assembles works from local artists and institution (Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society) whereas Hua-Xia paper cutting museum gathers works by means of travelling by curator and voluntary donation from artists [Song, 2003, p.98]. To the extent of classifying regional styles, Hua-Xia paper cutting museum documents distinct styles according to provinces and well-known artists based on curator's expertise while China paper cutting museum considers a province as a unit to point out unique style exemplified with representative works referencing from competition winner. In addition, the type and amount of collection in Hua-Xia paper cutting museum kept updating and expanding

in accordance with curator's interest of collecting art works, though the quality and value of collection may be questioned [Song and Lee, 2007, p15]. Whereas the display of collection of regional styles in China paper cutting museum is coordinated with interior design, is not allowed to alter works. Additionally, representative of specific style is addressed by Hua-Xia museum while China museum neglects the knowledge. Methods implemented by museums deliver pragmatic perspective comparing to theory-oriented measure. The development of paper cutting museums is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4.4 Differentiations between Hua-Xia and China paper cutting museums

Museum	Hua-Xia Paper cutting	China Paper cutting
Location	Hunan	Yangzhou
Time	2000	2007
Public recognition	The first paper cutting museum in China	The first official paper cutting museum in China
Type of organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Private</li> <li>● Personal funded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conducted by China cultural authority; built by Yangzhou craft company and Yangzhou craft factory</li> </ul>
Building	Curator's own house (a three-floor house)	A courtyard, three floors
Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Paper cutting pieces</li> <li>● Tools</li> <li>● Theoretic resources</li> <li>● Relevant product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Paper cutting pieces</li> <li>● Tools</li> <li>● Relevant publications</li> <li>● Relevant product (regional and nationwide)</li> <li>● Other craft</li> </ul>
Curator	Shijiao Qin (artist, scholar)	Jing Wang (artist)
Interaction with public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Private interviews are arranged with researchers</li> <li>● Curator gives lessons in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National competition and workshops are held regularly</li> <li>● Local artists give lessons to</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Constant publications by curator</li> </ul>	students in the studio
Method of collecting and storing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Travelling</li> <li>● Artists send works to the museum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● From local artists</li> <li>● From organization (competition winners' works)</li> </ul>
Method of restoring	Keep in drawers, boxes and shelves	Framed and displayed in open space
Method of classifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Province</li> <li>● Renowned artists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local well-known artists</li> <li>● Province</li> </ul>
Shortage	Lacking professional equipment to preserve and display works	Regional works are collected from competition winners which may not be elaborate enough
Merit	More than one example for each style. Curator keeps collecting works to update database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A platform for artists to perform and sell works</li> <li>● An official web site</li> </ul>

#### 4.5 Classification findings

In an attempt to discover variables of paper cutting styles in China, a new classification (as shown in Figure 4.10 and Table 4.6) is build up according to a visual analysis (Table 4.5 in Appendix C). The criterion of distinguishing regional styles is based on geography, ethnicity and stylist features, consists of seven categories including the north, the midstream of the Yellow River, the downstream of the Yellow River, the midstream of the Changjiang River, the downstream of the Changjiang River, the south and ethnic group. Accordingly, forty styles are selected to showcase unique features. In order to clarify differences, unique feature of each style is pointed out briefly and exemplified with one representative's work.

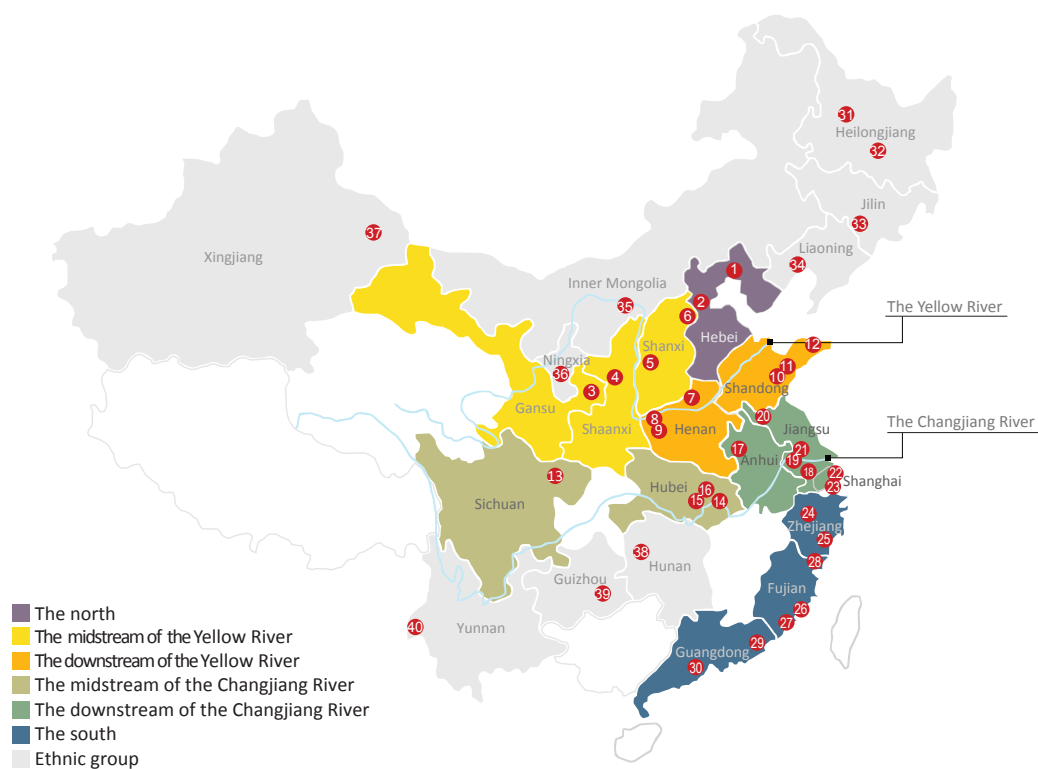










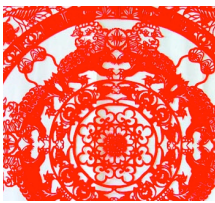


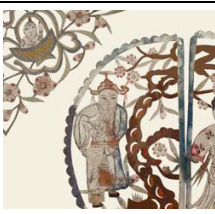


Figure 4.10 Classification based on geography, ethnicity and stylist features

Table 4.6 Classification based on geography, ethnicity and stylist features





Section	Province	Code	Style	Generalised distinct features	Imagery	Representative	Popularity
The north	Hebei	1	Fengning	Man Nationality		Dong Ger, Zhung	1,000 /407,000(1993)
		2	Yu County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Colouring technique/</li> <li>•Opera character/</li> <li>•Commercial</li> </ul>		Zhao Ming, Zhou	50,000/480,000(2012)







				lised			
The midstream of the Yellow River	Gansu	3	Qingyang	Traditional pattern		Sho Mei, Li	
	Shaanxi	4	Ansai	Traditional pattern/Symbolism		Jin Ai, Kao	15,000/164,000 (2007)
	Shanxi	5	Chungyang			Ji Ru, Wang	100/1389,000 (2011)
		6	Guanling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Chinese opera figures</li> <li>•Colouring skills</li> </ul>		Duo Tang, Zhang	2,500/180,000 (2009)
The downstream of the Yellow River	Henan	7	Hui County	Traditional patterns are transformed to soft imagery		Ai Ron, Li	
		8	Lingbao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Window flower</li> <li>•Metaphor</li> <li>•Traditional symbol</li> </ul>			










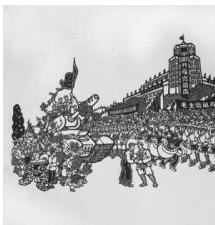
		9	Lushi County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cutting flower</li> <li>•Metaphor</li> <li>•Traditional symbol</li> </ul>		Chun Zhi, Yang	200
	Shandong	10	Ju County	Door label			
		11	Kaomi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Symbolism</li> <li>•Sense of movement</li> </ul>		Zuo Xin, Fan (2009)	68,000/860,000(2012)
		12	Yantai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Painted with ink</li> <li>•Window flower</li> </ul>		Shu Ron, Yi (2009)	10,000/6960,000(2010)
The midstream of the Changjiang River	Sichuan	13	Yilong	New cutting technique (tearing, burning, stabbing)		Zhu Lin, He	200/1080,000(1985)
	Hubei	14	Ezhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Subjects are overlapped</li> <li>•perspective</li> <li>•Over 2000 types</li> </ul>		Chia Chun, Zhang (2009)	5/1070,000(2010)










		15	Xiantao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Carving flower</li> <li>•Eight immortels</li> <li>•Perspective</li> </ul>		Jin Shan, Hu (2009)	200/1530,00(2006)
		16	Xiaogan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Carving flower</li> <li>•Special cutting tool/</li> <li>•Material: Fabric/Gold foil/Silver foil</li> <li>•Wall paper</li> </ul>		Li Fan, Kuan	300/5280,00(2000)
The downstream of the Changjian River	Anhui	17	Fuyang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Biggest scale of paper cutting</li> <li>•Rhythm of line</li> <li>•Material: silk</li> </ul>		Ching Ping, Wang	
	Jiangsu	18	Jintan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Door label</li> <li>•Lantern design</li> <li>•Subject: Life scenery/</li> <li>•Tearing technique</li> </ul>		Jao chun, Yan	


		19	Nanjing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Doshan flower</li> <li>•Floral patterns encircle flowers</li> <li>•Gold foil</li> </ul>		Fan Lin, Zhang	
		20	Yangzhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Thin lines, delicate style</li> <li>•White colour</li> <li>•Subject: flower/bird</li> </ul>		Zhang Yong shou	1000/446,000 (2011)
		21	Xuzhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Aboriginal</li> <li>•Leave blank</li> </ul>		Zhang Yong, Shou	10,000/8580,000 (2010)
	Shanghai	22	Fenglin	Combination of bold and thin lines		Ming Xi, Lin	
		23	Zhuanqiao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Perspective</li> <li>•Realism</li> </ul>		Ro Man, Chao	
	Zhejiang	24	Pujiang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Chinese opera figures</li> <li>•Subject: legendary stories</li> </ul>		Shan Zen, Wu	1,000/390,700(2010)

The south	Fujian			•Window flower			
		25	Yueching	•Dragon boat flower (lantern) •Geometric pattern		Bon Dong, Lin	20/12 40,000(2000)
		26	Quanzhou	Collaborated with lantern design		Yao Bao, Li	3,000/8140,000(2007)
		27	Zhangpu	•Renewed traditional pattern •Infuse other cultural concept •Cutting pattern: Pai		Qiu Ri, Chen	500/840,000 (2011) Annual income: 100,000
		28	Zherong	•Similar to Shanxi style •Asymmetry		Xiu Ying, Yuan	4,000/100,000(2012)

	Guangdong	29	Chaozhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Chinese opera figures</li> <li>•Material:gold, silver foil/cotton/drawn/silk/plastic film</li> </ul>		Gen He, Jiang	
		30	Foshan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Material:cooper</li> <li>•Symmetry</li> <li>•Cooper chisel cutting technique</li> </ul>		Yong Cai, Chen	
Ethnic group	Heilongjiang	31	Fangzheng	A mixture of nationalities		Sho Mei, Nee	15,000/220,000(2010)
		32	Hailun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Man Nationality</li> <li>•Imagery are exaggerated and cartooned</li> <li>•Magnificent scale and crowded scene</li> </ul>		Zuoren, Fu	1,300/830,000(2006)

	Jilin	33	Dongliao (Changbai Mountain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Traditional symbols of Man Nationality</li> <li>•Female figure</li> </ul>		Shia, Li	200/400,000 (2010) Annual income: £2000
	Liaoning	34	Yiwulv Mountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Traditional symbols of Man Nationality</li> <li>•Women figures(worship of goodness)</li> </ul>		Sho Xia, Wan	10,000(2012) Annual income: £25,000
	Inner Mongolia	35	Heilinger	Divide into north (nomadic) and south(farming) styles according to subjects		Hua Nu, Zhang	5,000 /187,000 (2012)

	Ningxia	36	Haiyuan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wall flower</li> <li>•Hui Nationality</li> <li>•Islam culture</li> </ul>		Zhao E, Fu	90,000/455,000 (2010)/684,000 RMB
	Xingjiang	37	Hami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Uygur nationality's folk habit and life scenery</li> <li>•Embroidery</li> </ul>			2,000/472,000(2010)
	Hunan	38	Tahu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Miao Nationality (pattern of butterfly)</li> <li>•Embroidery</li> <li>•Chisel flower</li> </ul>		Shin Long, Zheng	
	Guizhou	39	Jianhe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Miao Nationality</li> <li>•Embroidery</li> <li>•Aboriginal, imaginative style</li> </ul>			every one can do the art/4400,000

	Yunnan	40	Mang City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dai Nationality</li> <li>•Subject: religious features/elephant,peacock</li> <li>•Material:aluminum and shiny paper/fabric/gold foil</li> </ul>		Hua Chun, Si	4,000 /390, 000(2 011)

Source: reproduced from Yu County Travel Information [2010], Chen and Zhao [2012, p.26], Xinhuanet [2008], Xinhuanet [2012], Liaoning intangible culture heritage protection center [2010], Peopledaily [2006], Fengning.gov.cn [2011], Zhang [2013], China Painting News [2011], Shandong Pictorial [2008], Fujian Elementary Course [2010], Hu [2008], Liu [2012], Zhang and Zhang [2009, p.112], BEIJING DAILY [2011], YIYUANYI.ORG [2010], Guanming Daily [2012], Cheng and Zhao [2012, p.137], Wang [2011, p.71], Wang [2011, p.72], Fay and Zhang [2011, p.34], Hubei Culture Elite Map [2012], Hubei Folk Culture [2012], Bie [2013], Chinese Paper-cut Net [2012], Xinhuanet.com [2010], Chen and Zhao [2012, p.16], Zhu [2010, p.129], Chinese paper cutting educational net [2008], Hudong Baike [2014], Ruichang Message Net [2010], Wu and Zhang [2010], Chen [2007], Min Merchant [2010], Lan [2009], Craft114.com [2010], Ian and She [2009, p.177], Guangzhou Daily [2010], Yueching cultural museum [2011]

#### 4.6 Development of taxonomy

It is apparent to see from Figure 4.10 that the development of paper cutting art is vigorous among areas. Styles are formed by different cultures initially and end up generating distinguishing features. It seems that a region's life scenery is recorded by paper cutting

before words are invented. Also, the art is not formed individually but with local custom. In this case, the art preserves cultural heritage; imagery reflects native life style. For instance, minority nationalities represent distinctive folk habit and natural scene through paper cuttings. Factors like native material, local art performance and weather condition, all of which contribute to shape art form. In addition, different application results in variable transformation. In attempt to understand distinguished paper cutting styles in China, the chapter comprises discussion of literature review and previous theory followed by visual analysis. Example of each style is chosen from local representative awarded by government.

#### 4.6.1 Heilongjiang



Figure 4.11 Map of Heilongjiang

Heilongjiang is the northeast province of China and the culture is composited by native nation (Man nationality) and immigrances from south area [Huang, 2008, p.26]. In terms of a blend of different nationalities, paper cutting art presents both north style (bold imagery) and south



style (thin lines). Depicted subjects consist of natural scenery (animals, botany, shepherd) as well as religious symbol [Shu, 2005, p.10]. In this region the art development is active and is held by government in both educational and business perspectives.

It is suggested that Fangzheng style is blended by native nationalities and outside culture and result in a composition of north (simplicity) and south (elegance) [Zheng, 2010, p.226]. A variety of motif designs are shown in this area including life scenery, folk habit, celebration, auspicious words, dolls, natural scene, animals, botany, legendary and historical story. Single colour is adopted in a graph. Style is exaggerated and cartooned, as shown in Figure 4.12 [Tian, 2014, p. 25]. Similar to Fangzheng, Hailun style is formed by Man Nationality comes from middle area since Qing Dynasty [Huang, 2008, p.26]. Initially the art is mainly created by women in farming society for expressing emotions and gradually becomes a cultural industry. In this region content design tends to address reality of social event rather than illustrating abstract significance [Cui, 2010, p.22]. The art seems to be used as a media to reflect modern life, evolutionary activities and historical incident. Chinese ink painting, print and decorative painting are influential to graph composition [Huang, 2008, p.27]. Shape changing and exaggerated style appear to be special characters in this place. Also, magnificent and crowded scenery are the recognized feature, as illustrated in Figure 4.13 [Li, Zhao and Cheng, 2005, p.42].



Figure 4.12 Example of Fanzheng style created by Show Mei, Ne

Source: reproduced from Arton art net [2007]

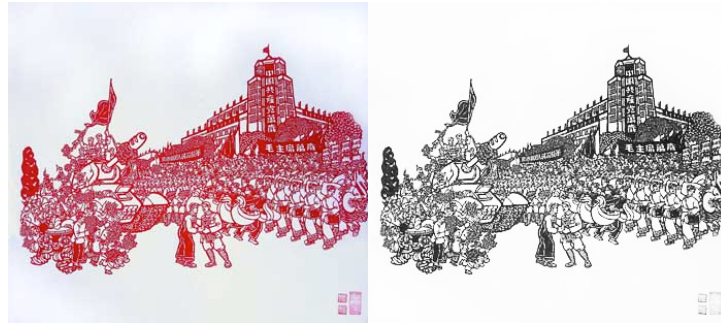


Figure 4.13 Example of Hailun style created by Zuoren, Fu

Source: reproduced from Xinhuanet [2008]

#### 4.6.2 Jilin



Figure 4.14 Map of Jilin

Paper cutting art in Jilin is articulated mainly by Man Nationality, which shows unique and profound cultural connotation. Also, the style embodies the pristine feature of Changbai Mountain [Shu, 2005, p.10; Cao, 2011, p.74]. The art is initiated for religious use such as ceremony of sacrificing ancestors. Content design consists of human figure (as shown in

Figure 4.15) and life scenery. Simplified native symbols are manifested broadly instead of decorative styles and forms [Liu and Ne, 2011, p.69]. Female family members predominate the task of preservation. Materials like tree skin, leaf and thick fiber paper are mainly practiced. It is worth noting that traditional cutting method in this region refers to begin cuttings with the center of graphs and complex patterns. In this place, distinguished paper cutting features of minority nationality comprises historical background, cultural significance and archaeological value [Cao, 2011, p.62].



Figure 4.15 Example of Jilin style

Source: reproduced from Hu [2009], Tao and Chen [2008, p.15]

### 4.6.3 Liaoning

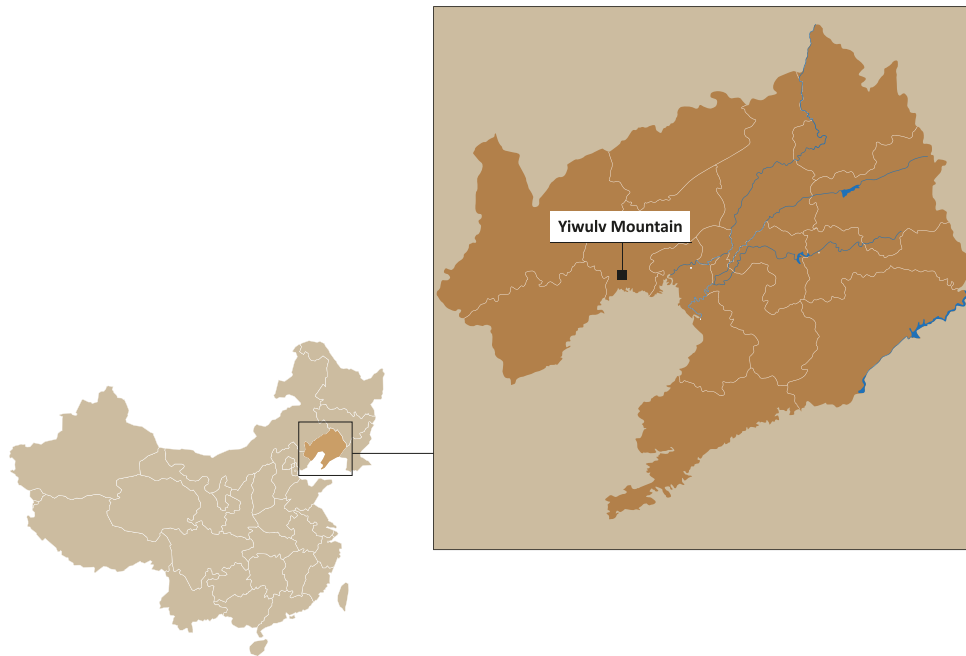


Figure 4.16 Map of Liaoning

Man Nationality mainly conducts paper cutting art in Liaoning [Yang, 2009, p.74]. In 2005, the style of Yiwulv Mountain is nominated as national cultural heritage and is the first award region in east-north area. In terms of the location of the border is considered a gate for cultural interaction by nationalities of north and centre. As a result, diversified subjects are depicted into content design. Also, it is discovered that in this region the worship of the goddess from Man group influences the design of paper cutting [Yang, 2009, p.190]. Women figures are created as graphic patterns into motif accordingly, as shown in Figure 4.17. In addition, symbols that signal fertility, such as melon, pomegranate, and gourd are commonly illustrated. Furthermore, referring to Liu and Liu [2009, p.94] and Zhang [2011, p.101], the use of paper cutting art is classified into five categories as shown in Table 4.6, which include leisure activity practiced by children, festive decoration for celebration, religious use, wizard power for driving out bad spirits and a medium of reflecting traditional legendary and cultural custom of Man group (as shown in Figure 4.18). The style is simple without intricate lines

and addresses more on realistic function. Red is used substantially to present auspicious meaning [Liu and Liu, 2009, p.95]. Women from conventional society seem to be the major artists in this area and the population of doing paper cutting art is estimated around ten thousands in 2012.



Figure 4.17 Example of Yiwulv Mountain style created by Xiu Xia, Wang  
Source: reproduced from Liaoning intangible culture heritage protection center [2010]



Figure 4.18 Example of Yiwulv Mountain style created by Zhi Guo, Zhao  
Source: reproduced from Liaoning cultural information [2009]

Table 4.7 Uses of paper cutting art in Yiwulv Mountain

Type of use	Leisure activity	Festive decoration	Religious use	Wizard power	Reflection of life
Producer	Children	Women	Women	Women	Women
Content	Animal Botany	Auspicious patterns (deer, gold fish, lotus) and folk activity	Words in rectangle form	Human figure	Folk habit Legendary

#### 4.6.4 Inner Mongolia



Figure 4.19 Map of Inner Mongolia

In terms of frequent interaction of diversified cultures, paper cutting art in Inner Mongolia reflects distinguished nationalities' natures. Also, the worship of nature, ancestors and traditional patterns relatively affect the design of paper cutting art. Subjects of motif can be divided into four styles including natural patterns (botany, animal, mountain, water, fire,

cloud), auspicious patterns (Chinese words, symbols), combination patterns (flowers with fire, fish with flowers), and geometric patterns [Shu, 2005, p.8]. In addition, in order to adjust constant mobile living style, durable and practical designs are needed in this area. Referring to historical record that animal skins and organs are commonly used for clothing. Hence, the application of material influences paper cutting art. In this place natural resources affect art performance and artists make cuttings with leather [Zhou, 2011, p.52].

According to Liu [2007, p.39], Helingeer County is one of the important zones of cultural blending for nomadic nationalities and cultivated inhabitants. The art is widely used for celebration and is created mainly by women in conventional society. Both cutting and carving skills are used generally. Life scenery, natural surrounding and domestic animals are commonly portrayed. There is no sign of using perspective view or timeline for composition; subjects are complemented in two-dimensional layout. Abstract outline, exaggerated form and simple composition are identities of this region [Zhou, 2011, p.53]. It is discovered that the art style is divided into north and south schools. Based on local living scenery, north style depicts nomadic life (as shown in Figure 4.20) whereas the south focuses on farming activity (as shown in Figure 4.21) [Wu, 2012]. It seems that there is no rule for creation; shape of motif can be changed freely only depends on creators' knowledge of beauty.



Figure 4.20 Example of Helingeer style created by Hua Nu, Zhang

Source: reproduced from Peopledaily [2006]



Figure 4.21 Example of Helinger style created by Yu Tong, Liu

Source: reproduced from Wu [2012]

#### 4.6.5 Hebei



Figure 4.22 Map of Hebei province

Hebei, the capital province, possesses a great deal of cultural prestige in terms of geographic reason, which result in a blend of diverse nationalities and cultures. People who live near yellow river mainly see wild plants and animals as major food and gradually develop the worship of natural power in terms of insufficient productive circumstance. For instance, earth,



wind, water, fire, animals are signalled as goodness. The adoration of nature becomes inspiration to folk art. Also, traditional culture are well preserved between generations, such as symbolic patterns, legendary story and character are popular subjects in paper cutting art. Besides, opera characters are depicted broadly [Shu, 2005, p.9]. Initially the art is used for expelling evil spirits and religious use but evolve to various applications such as decorations for wedding, funeral, festival, celebration as well as costume design [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.35]. In this place the art comprises two types of usage: pasting onto the wall and window, and hanging on the window and door. Distinctive colouring method is acknowledged as iconic label of the region, as shown in Figure 4.23. A wide range of selective subject results from a combination of various nations.

Fengning style begins since Chin Dynasty and is originally used to support the structure of windows [Li and Shou, 2006, p.247; Bao and Wang, 2010, p.228]. In terms of the major population of Man Nationality, the motif design inclines to focus on life scenery of distinctive nationality, as shown in Figure 4.24. Also, natural scene, popular legendary, Chinese words and graphs like dragon and phoenix, which signal good fortune, are often used for design. Scissor and carving knife are used at the same time. Both single and mixed colours are adopted.

It is suggested that the style of Yu County derives from multi-cultures result from geographic location, the main traffic station of the north and generates a distinguished feature [Lee and Shou, 2006, p.99]. The emphasis of content design lies on botany, animal, legendary hero and story as well as opera character figures. In terms of the popularity of Chinese opera in the area, the affection for characters transfers to inspiration for paper cutting art. Opera characters and faces are intensively depicted and regarded as identical design for the style, as illustrated in Figure 4.25. Radiant colour created by dying technique is considered to be recognizable for this region [Shu, 2005, p.10]. In order to present the purity of bright hues, high contrast of colour arrangement is accustomed applied. Though the style of the region is identified by conspicuous hues, cutting skill seems to play substantial role in the production. It is said that

if a paper cutting work requires thirty-percentage of effort on colouring, then the rest is accomplished by cutting. In this place both scissor and graver are used for different effect. Tools are made by individual artists to achieve the best result.



Figure 4.23 Illustration of colouring technique in Yu County

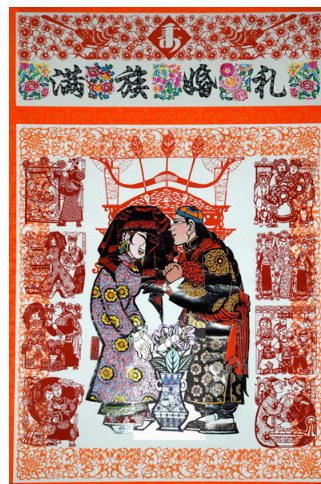


Figure 4.24 Example of Fengning style created by Dong Ger, Zhung

Source: reproduced from [Fengning.gov.cn](http://Fengning.gov.cn) [2011]



Figure 4.25 Example of Yu County style

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993,p.98]

#### 4.6.6 Gansu

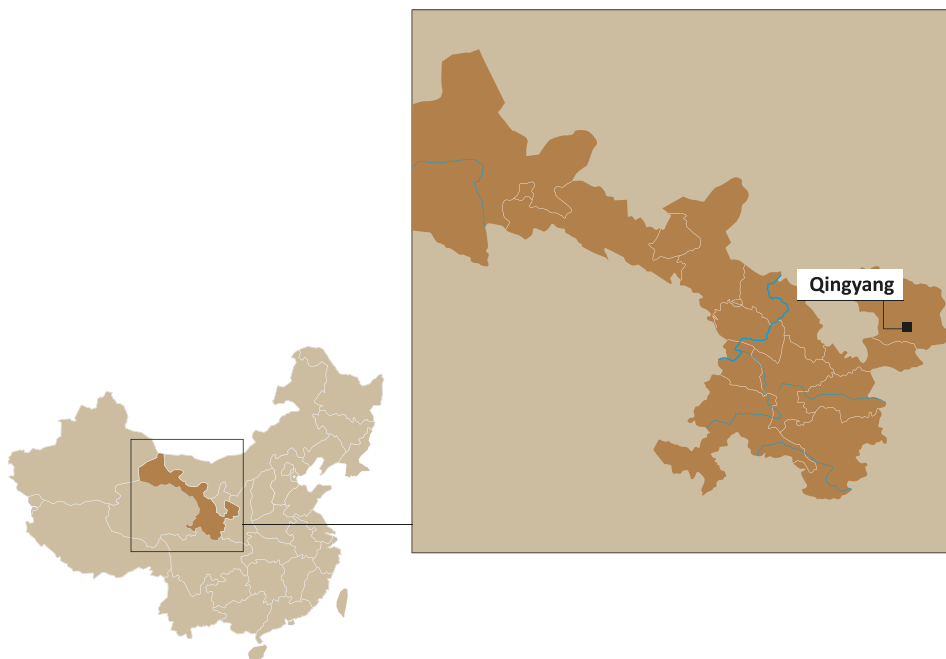


Figure 4.26 Map of Gansu

The inner location becomes obstacle in economy as well as artistic activity [Zhang, 1996, p.25]. However, paper cutting art in Gansu keeps traditional and authentic culture well in terms of geographic reason. It is believed that a piece of paper cutting may contain thousands years of cultural history [Shu, 2005, p.8]. The adoration of ancient patterns originates from

religious use conducted in tribes in early times. Animals are illustrated dominantly including bear, dog, cow, deer, lion, tiger and dragon. Every tribe treats ideal patterns as their predecessors or god and applies images to art. In addition, symbols that indicate fertility are addressed substantially. In terms of humble life style, there is no limit or constraint but imaging and symbolism [Zhang, 1996, p.27]. Exaggerating and abstract styles are shown in this region.

In ancient times people believe wild creatures have correlation with god [Lu, 2012, p.4]. According to Lu [2012, p.4] there are dragon and deer culture and each has been respected as ancestor. Hence there are considerable amount of images of animal and ogre (human's face with animal's body) in Qingyang style, as illustrated in Figure 4.27. Also, application of symbolism is taken as a means to drive out bad spirit and ask for luck [Cao and Zhang, 2007, p.58]. Besides, natural scenery and historic myth are commonly described [Baidu.com, 2012]. Red and green are majorly adopted.



Figure 4.27 Example of Qingyang style created by Xiu Mei, Li

Source: reproduced from Zhang [2013]

#### 4.6.7 Xinjiang

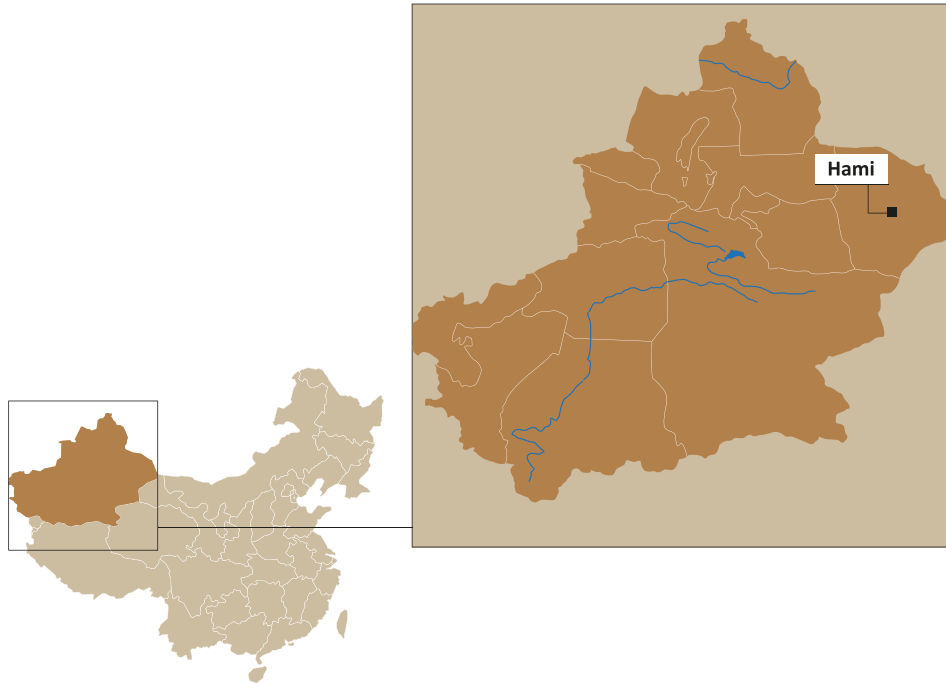


Figure 4.28 Map of Xinjiang

In terms of inner location and dry weather condition, the earliest, pristine heritage of paper cutting is found in Xinjiang [Jiang, 2009, p.20]. It is suggested that gold foil, fabrics, leather are used to produce paper cuttings before paper is invented [Cheng, 1986, p.70]. The region is formed by diverse cultures and each nationality develops unique style and use. Distinctive subjects are illustrated including local geographic scenery, folk habit (as illustrated in Figure 4.29), history, legend, religious culture and life scenery. National history is mainly addressed comprising tribe, war and symbolism of ethnic nations. In addition, it is discovered a remarkable amount of human figures in content, influenced by wall paintings in stone cave. The most famous style belongs to Hami, which is mainly conducted by women depict grapes, melon and pomegranate majorly [xjdaily.com, 2004-2011]. The application of Hami style is divided into practical use (embroidery) and pure art works. When patterns used on costume

design and bed lining, graphs of botany and bird are illustrated more than human figure, as shown in Figure 4.30.



Figure 4.29 Example of Xinjiang style created by Ai Shan, Shui

Source: reproduced from Xinjiang daily [2009]



Figure 4.30 Example of Hami style

Source: reproduced from China Painting News [2011]

#### 4.6.8 Shandong

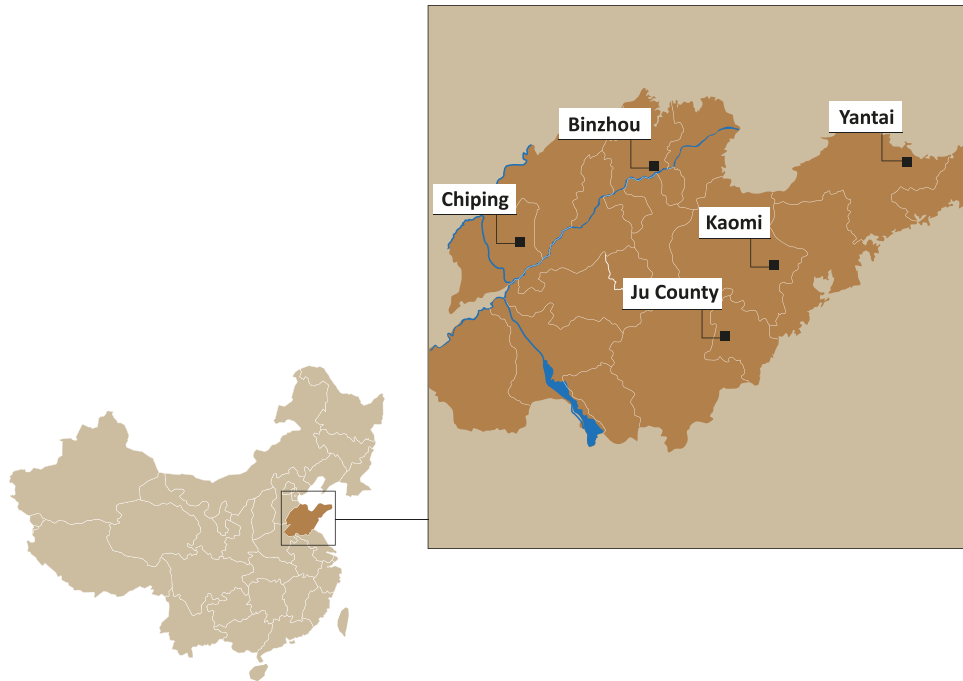


Figure 4.31 Map of Shandong

Paper cutting art in Shandong is majorly divided into two styles, Binzhou and Kaomi [Shu, 2005, p.9]. Binzhou is regarded as a farming village surrounded by various kinds of paper cuttings. “Window flower” is regarded the common form in addition to embroidery. In this area doing the art seems to be easy task for everyone [Wang, 1995, p.44]. The art is initiated by immigrants and results in a mixture of north and south styles. In this region paper cutting art is acknowledged as auspicious symbol. Lucky graphs are illustrated mostly in celebration, such as botany (calabash, in particular). Domestic animals and working scenes are illustrated to present diligent life style, as shown in Figure 4.32. Also, legendary story and characters circulating around Yellow River are considered popular topics. It is worth mentioning that Binzhou style presents bold and simplified imagery among other styles in the region, which may due to the north position influenced by north area.

Similar to Binzhou style, Chiping style specialists traditional symbols. Styles are divided to two streams, east and west. Eastern style concentrates on outline design while the other focuses on decorative patterns, as illustrated in Figure 4.33. In this region artists possess mellow skills cutting paper without sketching in advance.

Ju county is prestigious for the form, ‘Door hangings’, is considered a folk habit in local area. The style is pasted on the door during Chinese New Years to pray for good luck. In terms of blessing purpose, auspicious graphs like botany, animals, natural scenery and human figures are illustrated majorly. Rectangle shape (16-29x8.5-19cm) is the typical size. Five pieces are a set. Red, green, yellow, pink, purple and blue are considered colours of happiness and also used in painting, printing and toy design [Zheng, 1993, p.293], as shown in Figure 4.34 [Ju County Governmental Association, 2011, p.63]. In relation to the typical composition: Chinese words or graphs are put in the middle of the picture surrounded by various kinds of line patterns. Special cutting equipment (module) is developed nowadays instead of scissors.

Li [2010, p.73] proposed that artists from Hebei, Shanxi and southern provinces influence paper cutting style in Kaomi. Through thousands years of interaction and study, the style is blended into uniqueness. Also, grave paintings located in surroundings from Han Dynasty have impact on aesthetic performance. The reason the popularity of the style is that the diversified content design it achieves. Subjects like daily life and folk habit are mostly illustrated. Various kinds of motifs are depicted comprising auspicious patterns (botany, anima, Chinese words), Chinese opera figures, and legendary story [Kuo, 2010, pp.11-14]. The majority of local artists are female. Art works are employed commonly in celebrations such as traditional festival, religious ceremony and decorative art. Symbolism and metaphor are happened habitually to convey people’s wills. Both thin and bold outlines are accomplished in work. Shape of subject is amplified but not far from realism. In addition, Kaomi style shows a sense of movement in this two dimensional presentation [Shan, 2010, p.148], as illustrated in Figure 4.35.



In Yantai paper cutting art is not only practiced as an artistic form but also in variety including decorations for home and celebration, religious ceremony, embroidery and toy design [Li, 2007, pp.70-77]. When works are used for decoration, subjects such as paper fan, lampshade, wall, door and window determine size and shape, as shown in Figure 4.36. Also, in order to fit the limited structure, the design of paper cutting inclines to be detailed. Besides stereotype of red colour, Yantai style manifests colouring technique and is suggested that developing time exceeds Yu County (Hebei province) [Shandong intangible cultural heritage, 2011]. It is worth mentioning that outline painted with ink is a distinguished method of this style [Li, 2007, p.76]. On the other hand, according to Li (the curator of local paper cutting museum) that in this region, gold and silver pieces are used as optional material.



Figure 4.32 Example of Binzhou style

Source: reproduced from China regional styles [2011]



Figure 4.33 Example of Chipping style

Source: reproduced from Hunan nature [2011]



Figure 4.34 Example of Ju County style

Source: reproduced from Shandong Pictorial [2008], Wang [2011, p.107]



Figure 4.35 Example of Kaomi style created by Zu Shin, Fan

Source: reproduced from Fujian Elementary Course [2010]



Figure 4.36 Examples of Yantai style

Source: reproduced from Hu [2008], Kao [2010, p.45]

#### 4.6.9 Shanxi



Figure 4.37 Map of Shanxi

Paper cuttings aims to satisfied both material and mental needs. Artists use metaphor to show their wish of pursuing happiness and reflect local habit. For example, patterns like peony,

dragon are illustrated to implicate wealthy, long life while tiger, scorpion are used to avoid bad spirit. Graphs like lotus and fish implicate good luck for giving a birth. Besides aesthetic value, paper cutting art seems to be taken as a means of preserving local culture. According to Cui [2012, pp.109-110] that paper cutting art contains moral concept as well as traditional belief, as a result contributes to education to the society. For instance, stories like hero legendary, devotion for parents are often depicted in Shanxi to encourage ideal character.

Chungyang style embodies ancient grace of Chin and Han Dynasty, simple composition with exaggerated outlines [Shu, 2005, p.8]. In this area, women from agricultural society dominate paper cutting art. In terms of moderate character, development of the art is limited but result in indigenous and authentic feature. In this area, folk habit, life scenery and legendary are mostly illustrated, as shown in Figure 4.38 [Dong, 2011, p.50]. Single colour is adopted in a graph such as red, black and white.

Paper cutting art in Guangling has been developed over three thousands years [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.11; Fay, 2010, p.12]. Women in agricultural society are considered to obtain cutting skills in order to gain better qualification for marriage [Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.15]. The main cutting tool is carving knife, which accelerates efficiency of production [Wang, 2011, p.87]. Tools are classified to various kinds and are made according to artist's habit. A professional artist is likely to have twenty different shapes of knives for specific effect.

Besides single colour (red), the region progresses colouring technique (alcohol with water colours). There are over thirty hues can be spectated in a work, as shown in Figure 4.39. Combing intricate and bold lines, the feature is elegant but animated. The art starts as floral window decoration and gradually evolves to massive kinds of subjects including animal, botany, insect, opera face, legendary, dance, modern hero, natural scene, tourist attraction, life scenery [Fay, 2010, p.15]. It is worth mentioning that in this area the layout of natural scenery is composed in three-dimensional, which create a new version of the style, as illustrated in

Figure 4.40. In addition, the art in this county is been commercialized as a brand of one of cultural industry in China [Pei, 2010, p.64-65].



Figure 4.38 Example of Chungyang style created by Ji Ru, Wang

Source: reproduced from Liu [2012]



Figure 4.39 Example of Guangling style produced by Duo Tong, Zhang

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2009, p.112]



Figure 4.40 Example of Guangling style produced by Duo Tong, Zhang

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [2009, p.202]

#### 4.6.10 Henan

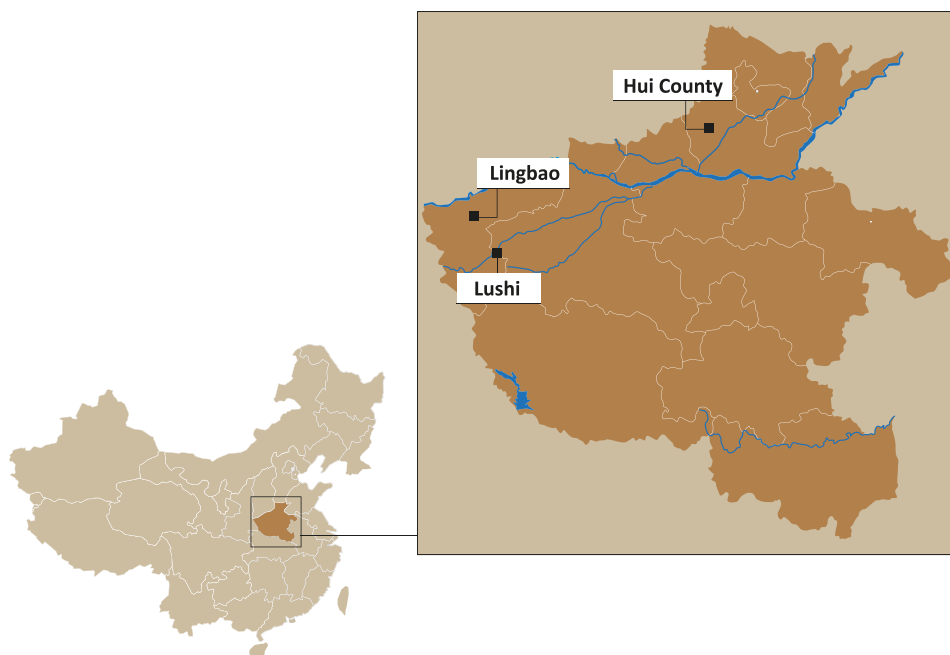


Figure 4.41 Map of Henan

Referring to Fon [2008, p.248] that paper cutting art in Henan begins at Song Dynasty. In this region the art is majorly used for festivals and celebration. Subjects like life scenery, auspicious symbols, legend and historic story are articulated popularly. In matter of colouring



technique, both single and multi-colours (e.g. yellow, green, rose) paper cuttings appear in the area. It is interesting to note that except red, black is used as common choice in terms of adoration to black [Shu, 2005, p.8]. However, Sun [2010, p.199] proposed that black is not welcome for celebration in traditional concept. A mixed use of cutting patterns (e.g. sharp teeth and moon teeth) constitutes various layers, is considered a unique feature of the region [Fon, 2008, p.249]. Also, besides scissors and knife, shaping graph by tearing shows an innovative perspective.

Sun [2010, p.199] proposed in the area of content design, there is a tendency towards human figure hence imagery of animals are transformed to approach humanity and softness, as shown in Figure 4.42. ‘Window flower’ style and colouring technique are identical features in Lingbao city [Fon, 2008, p.249]. On the contrary, Lushi style, also called ‘Cutting flower’, seems to manifest the art in red substantially. In this place style has been divided into two schools in terms of geography. Each of them embodies culture of Yellow River and Chanjiang River. Traditional and mystery patterns are illustrated predominately to reveal admiration of ancient culture and imply fine wishes. As a result, metaphor is primary used. For instance, a combination of human with animals implies harmony and fertility.



Figure 4.42 Example of Hui County style created by Ai Ron, Li

Source: reproduced from BEIJING DAILY [2011]

#### 4.6.11 Shaanxi

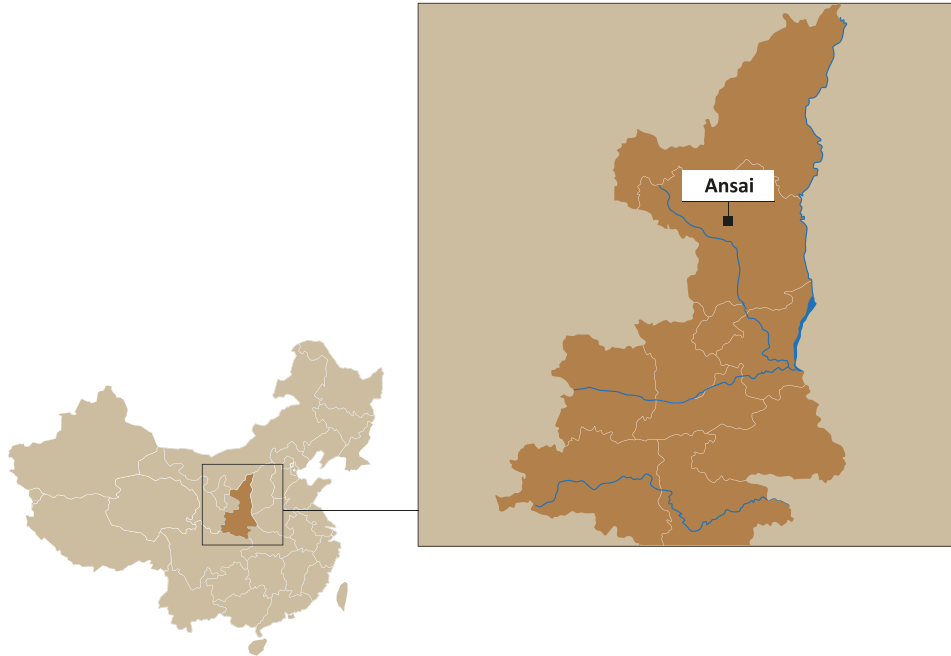


Figure 4.43 Map of Shaanxi

Shaanxi is in Yellow River basin where ancient nationality and folk arts are cultivated. Pottery, painting stones, sculpture and Chinese paintings are influential to local art development. The heritage of paper cutting art in Shaanxi is considered the most well preserved in the field in terms of difficult traveling route [Zhou, 1992, p.69]. Traditional graphs and local habits are often depicted in designs. Also, symbolism is implemented in a great deal, which reflects worship of ancient pattern and religious belief. Patterns like “a fish plays with lotus”, “a rabbit eats cabbage” implicate good luck for giving birth, are identical feature of this region [Shu, 2005, p.8; Cao, 2009, p.79]. Zheng [2008, p.48] proposed that in Shaanxi, artists attempt to infuse subjects as many as possible to a graph to symbol a complete and satisfied life which result in decorative, complex feature, as shown in Figure 4.44. Accordingly, enlarging the proportion of subjects seems to be another approach to accomplish concept of fulfilling.



It is interesting to note that in this region, different sizes of subjects are depicted to create sense of distance to make dimensional perspective [Zheng, 2008, p.49]. In Ansai, family members play teaching roles to pass down knowledge of style and skill [Liu and Zou, 2006, p.11]. Uneducated women from agricultural society are considered to be main creators of paper cutting art. Female artists see the art as a relief after tedious working routine. In terms of mellow skill, works are done without sketching in advance.

In this region paper cutting art is mainly used for recreation as well as a tool for recording daily life, hence a variety of subjects are chosen from surroundings. Artists concentrate fully on articulating simplicity of authentic life without being affected by commercial value, modern development and political policy [Sue, 2011, p.30]. In terms of devotion for reflecting nationality's character and local scene, Ansai style is famous in nations and worldwide. Exhibitions of representatives are held regularly around the world. In addition, in this area paper cutting artists also conduct agricultural paintings, as shown in Figure 4.45.



Figure 4.44 Examples of Ansai style

Source: reproduced from YIYUANYI.ORG [2010], Tao and Chen [2008, p.3]



Figure 4.45 Example of agricultural painting in Ansai

Source: reproduced from Yan [2012]

#### 4.6.12 Ningxia



Figure 4.46 Map of Ningxia

Paper cutting art in Ningxia shows distinguished feature formed by Hui group and Islamic culture [Wu, 2010]. ‘Window flower’ and ‘Wall flower’ are main forms in the area in addition to embroidery. It is interesting to note that “Wall flower’ refers to puzzle various coloured paper into diverse graphs onto walls [Wang, 2008, p.135]. In this case style is

exaggerated and symbolic. Traditional topics are manifested including botany, animals, container (bowl, vase), Chinese word, human figure, opera and legendary characters, folk and historic story and legend. Except from auspicious patterns, local habit and social incident are illustrated to present unique life style, as illustrated in Figure 4.47. It is worth mentioning that Islamic elements like pot, carpet, Koran (as illustrated in Figure 4.48) and mosque are depicted [Wu, 2010]. Paper cutting art is regarded a family heritage to preserve, therefore women from farming community learn skills from family members. Red, yellow and green are regarded festive colours and can be seen mostly in wedding ceremony.



Figure 4.47 Example of Ningxia style created by Zhao E, Fu

Source: reproduced from Tao and Chen [2008, p.130]



Figure 4.48 Example of Ningxia style combined with Koran

Source: reproduced from Yuan [2010]

#### 4.6.13 Jiangsu

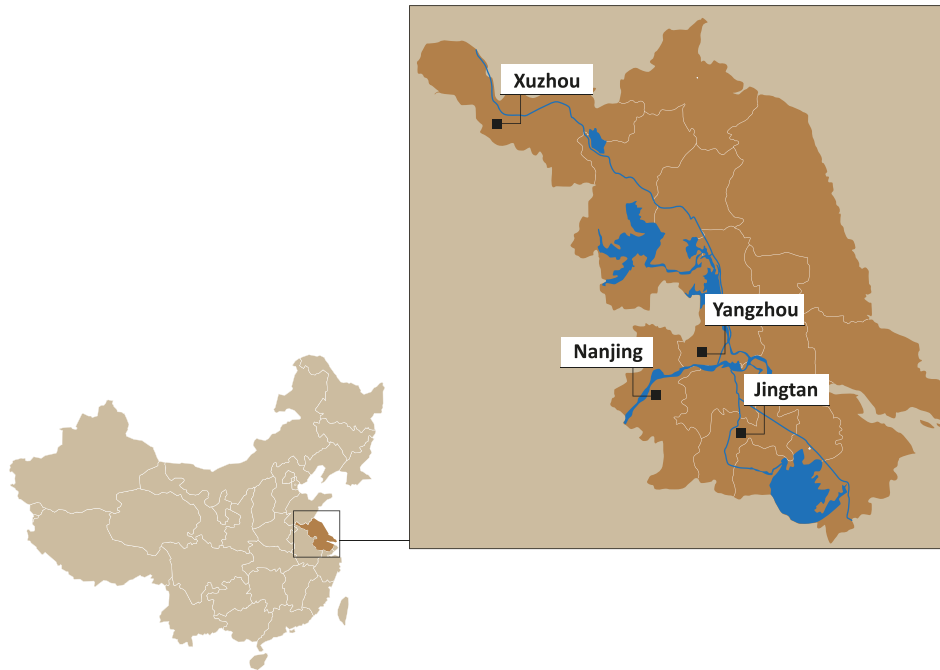


Figure 4.49 Map of Jiangsu

The earliest sign of paper cutting art in Nanjing can be traced back to Qing Dynasty and has been developing over three hundred years [Ting, 2012, p.103]. The art in this region has evolved to one of cultural industries and professional manufactures are set up to support the development [Shao, 1960, p.1]. As a result, artists have stable income from doing paper cuttings which enables concentrating on practicing and innovating [Wang, 2011, p.71]. In terms of geographic reason that the art is developed vigorously in nearby provinces, Nanjing style generates a new style through a cultural exchange. For instance, “Do Shan flower” is used to decorate articles (candle, flag) in religious ceremony and is regarded a distinguished art form in the area, as shown in Figure 4.50 [Wang, 2011, p.72]. Floral patterns encircle flowers are identical feature of this style [Ting, 2012, p.103], as illustrated in Figure 4.51. It is worth mentioning that gold foil is experimented besides coloured, shinny paper, as shown in Figure 4.52. Works in Nanjing are commonly done in circle shape to signal auspicious meaning of a complete, happiness life.

In Jintan paper cutting skill is passed down by male predecessors and is practiced mainly by male artists. The art starts in Ming Dynasty and is used as ornament to avoid bad spirits originally and becomes a pure art form. To adjust modern taste, scene of modern life is illustrated besides traditional subjects like natural scene, human figure, flower, bird and folk story [Gao, 2011]. In this place works can be seen in large scale, as shown in Figure 4.53. It is discovered that in this region artists attempt to improve new technique by experimenting with different types of paper as well as finding inspiration from other styles [Baidu, 2012]. As a result, various colour combinations are adopted, as illustrated in Figure 4.54. In this place the art has been commercialized by professional craft company therefore the art is transformed to product [Gou, 2011].

Paper cutting art in Xuzhou begins in Han Dynasty. The idea of perspective composition from wall painting, stone painting affects the style of paper cutting art. Ladies in Xuzhou County learn to do paper cuttings since childhood. The ability of doing the art is considered to be a qualification for marriage. Brides have to do the art to decorate new wedding rooms and implement patterns onto embroidery for costume and daily articles' designs. Artists in this region are used to experiment high contrast of colour arrangement, such as red or black with white. Life scenery is mostly depicted besides traditional patterns. It is interesting to note that the style addresses narrative scenes and a wide range of blank is commonly left on a graph, as shown in Figure 4.55 [Yao, 2010, p32; Lu and Zhou, 2012, p.198].

Yangzhou city is one of the earliest regions where paper cutting art is cultivated and is regarded as the most influential one in Jiangsu province [Chen, 2001, p.17]. According to historical record that the art starts in Han Dynasty, and is used for decorating pottery initially and gradually evolves to appear in festivals and religious ceremony [Gou, 2009, p.75]. It is proposed that the art is influenced by embroidery and Chinese paintings. White cotton paper is mainly used. Subjects like flowers and birds are mostly depicted [Ju, 1981]. Outline of graph are thin and delicate. The vivid movement of natural creature is considered to be the identical feature of Yangzhou style, as illustrated in Figure 4.56.



Figure 4.50 Example of Do Shan flower in Nanjing created by Fan Lin, Zhang

Source: reproduced from Wang [2011, p.71]

5



Figure 4.51 Example of Nanjing style

Source: reproduced from Liu and Wang [2009, p.298]



Figure 4.52 Example of Do Shan flower in Nanjing created by Fan Lin, Zhang

Source: reproduced from Wang [2011, p.72]





Figure 4.53 Example of Jingtan style created by Jao Chun, Yan  
 Source: reproduced from Chen and Zhao [2012, p.118], Xiao [2012]



Figure 4.54 Example of Jingtan style created by Jao Chun, Yan  
 Source: reproduced from Chen and Zhao [2012, p.137]



Figure 4.55 Example of Xuzhou style created by Qui Yi, Wang  
Source: reproduced from Baidu.com [2012]



Figure 4.56 Example of Yangzhou thin line style created by Yong Shou, Zhang  
Source: reproduced from Fay and Zhang [2011, p.34]



#### 4.6.14 Anhui

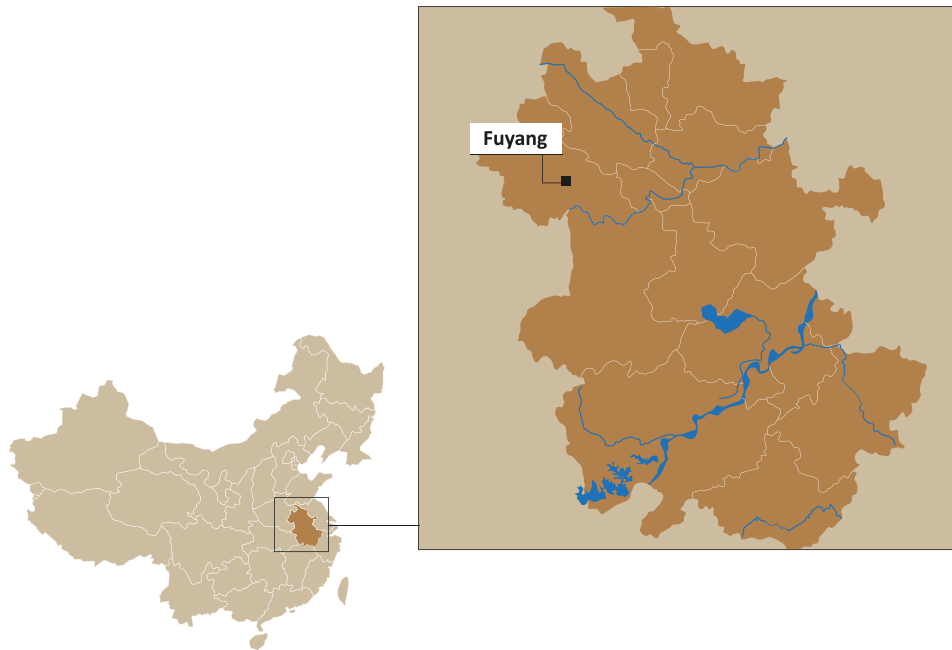


Figure 4.57 Map of Anhui

The history of paper cutting art in Fuyang originates from Han Dynasty. There are two types of application: decoration in celebrations and festivals, and embroidery on costume design [Gou, 2011, p.164]. Women from agricultural society are the main creators in this region. Natural surroundings and art culture have great impact on paper cuttings. Hence celebrated ceremony, flowers, birds and insects, opera characters and life scenery are commonly illustrated. Auspicious patterns are drawn to symbol local people's belief and thoughts. Both bold and thin lines are comprised in graphs result from a blend of north and south style [Shu, 2005, p.10; Gou and Li, 2012, p.149]. Besides singular colour (red), dying technique is practiced, as shown in Figure 4.58. In addition, Tao culture affects the design of outline, which emphasizes curve and rhythm, as shown in Figure 4.59. Artists in this region attempt to keep the style as well as innovate this old art. Qing Ping Wu, Secretary of Fuyang paper

cutting research committee has accomplished the longest paper cutting in the world (223.11m) in 2005 [Qingpingfang.cn, 2011].



Figure 4.58 Examples of Fuyang style

Source: reproduced from Baidu [2012]



Figure 4.59 Example of Fuyang style created by Ching Ping Wang

Source: reproduced from Zhao [2012]

#### 4.6.15 Hubei

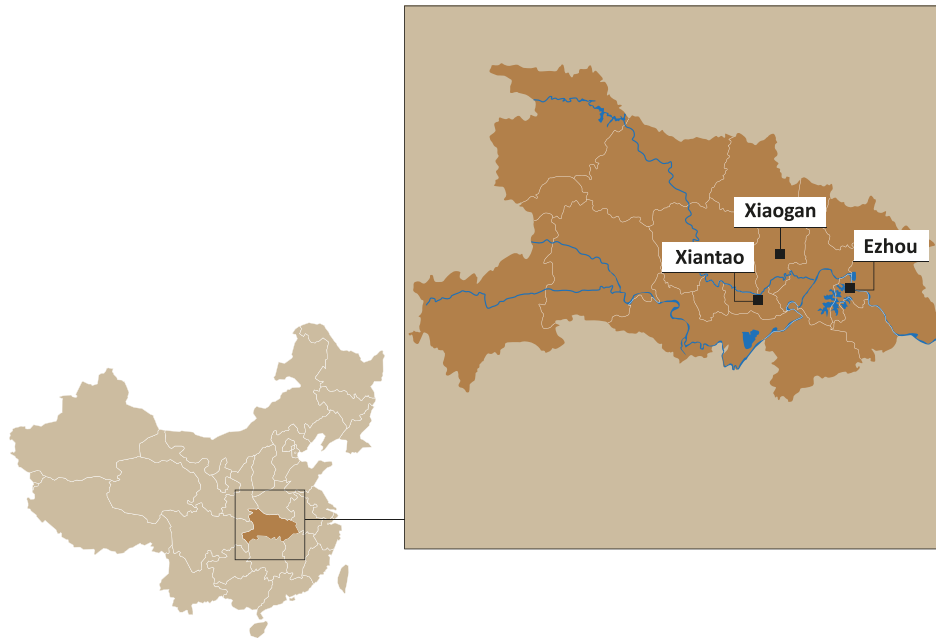


Figure 4.60 Map of Hubei

Paper cutting in Hubei is called ‘carving flower’ in terms of detailed and delicate style. According to He [2008, p. 71], paper cutting art in Ezhou has been developing for a thousand year. The art is dominated by women from farming village and gradually becomes an industry. In terms of convenient travelling route, art works circulate around the nation. Paper cutting art in this region is either decorative or practical and are made to support the need of embroidery for costume and pillows [Li, 2006, p.43]. Over two thousands authentic pieces are collected in local museum. Ideas are derived from folk habit and personal preferences. Life scenery, auspicious pattern and social occasion are major subjects for motif design [Li, 2006, p.44]. Also, traditional performance such as Chinese opera and legendary story are manifested popularly. Different objects are overlapped to create perspective; words are illustrated as pictures, as shown in Figure 4.61. Works reveal simplicity and authentic thinking. Metaphor

is the method to express wishes while symbolism is used for recording cultural heritage. Style is exaggerated but simple, colour is radiant and contrast.

Paper cutting art in Xiaogan originates from Ming Dynasty [Zhang, 2009, p.69]. In terms of middle location, style is a blend of north and south schools. Folk belief, local festivals, religious ceremony, natural seasons are depicted commonly. Historic legends are illustrated to convey the idea of good manner and wishes [Xu, 2010, p.314]. Applications are classified into religious ceremony, practical design (embroidery) and decoration. Singular coloured cotton paper is used in a graph. Yellow, white, black are commonly shown in religious ceremony while red and gold are presented in celebration. Also, thin and flammable paper is practiced for religious use while thick and plain paper is adopted for practical design. Initially scissor is predominate tool and gradually evolves to use graving knife mainly, which are made specially to create fluent outlines, as illustrated in Figure 4.62 [Shu, 2005, p.9; Du, 2009; Xu, 2010, p.315].

Paper cutting art in Xiantao has been developing for one thousand and five hundred years. However, in terms of constant flooding condition, heritage is not preserved well. In this region women use the art for embroidery whereas men practice paper cuttings. Tradition art like annual painting and Chinese calligraphy have significant impact on paper cutting. Perspective is created to accomplish dimensional version. Motif contains both tradition and modern including auspicious patterns and legend to metaphor blessing meaning and social occasion to boost educational significance. Singular colour is adopted in the region. Human figure is regarded as identical feature of this style, as shown in Figure 4.63. It is worth mentioning that the topic of eight immortels is famous worldwide [Xiao, 1997, p.98].



Figure 4.61 Example of Ezhou style

Source: reproduced from Hubei Culture Elite Map [2012]



Figure 4.62 Examples of Xiaogan style created by Li Fang Kuan

Source: reproduced from Hubei Folk Culture [2012]

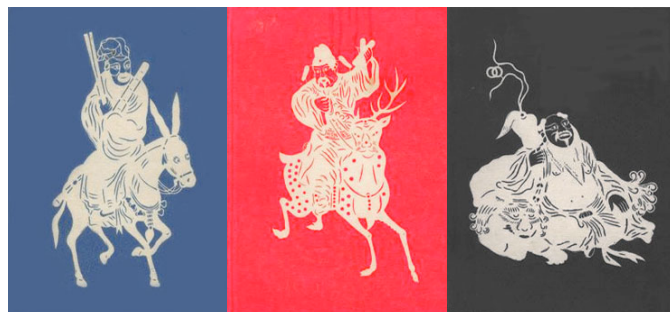


Figure 4.63 Examples of Xiantao style created by Chun Fa, Yang and Yo Ming, Cheng

Source: reproduced from Bie [2013]

#### 4.6.16 Sichuan



Figure 4.64 Map of Sichuan

It is recorded that in Yilong County, paper cutting art has been developing for one thousand and five hundreds years. Besides paper cutting, the region is also famous for other traditional art like Chinese calligraphy as well as carving skills and each of them influences one and another. Originally paper cutting art is used as a criterion for judging women's talent in conventional society. Works mainly comprise auspicious symbols to signal good wishes and are commonly shown in home decoration [Chinese Paper-cut Net, 2012]. Most depicted subjects include lucky graphs, lather and floral, legendary story, historic hero and life scenery. Single colour is presented in a graph. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that except shaping designs by cutting tools, methods like tearing and burning are invented, as shown in Figure 4.65.



Figure 4.65 Example of Yilong style created by Zhu Lin, He  
Source: reproduced from Chinese Paper-cut Net [2012]

#### 4.6.17 Yunnan

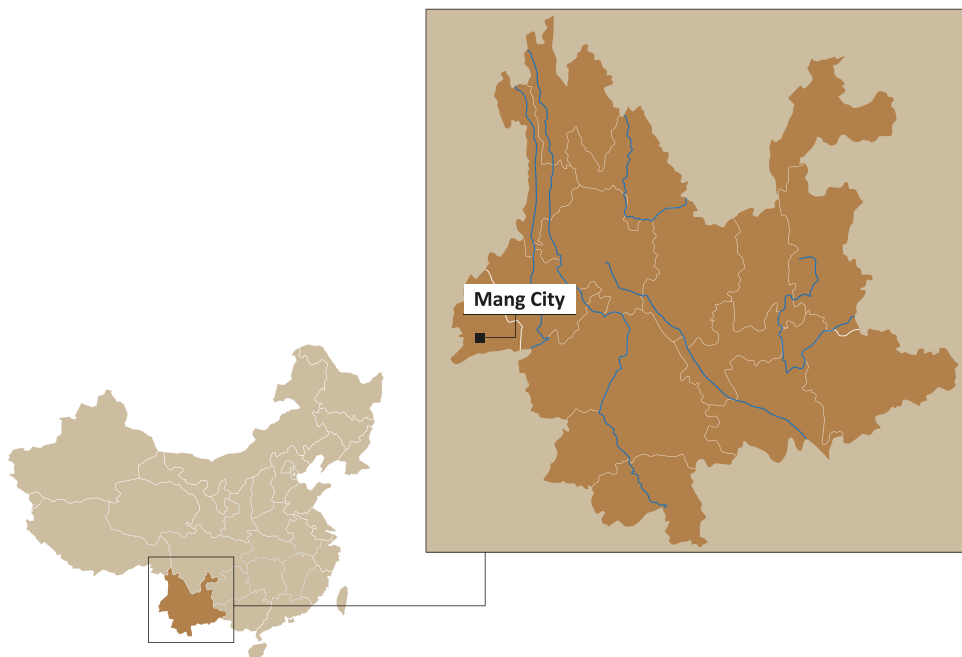


Figure 4.66 Map of Yunnan

In Yunnan, ethnic groups conduct paper cutting art. Dai group located in Man City, especially, is regarded the most distinguished style [Wang, 2011, p.51]. Development of the art is affected by folk habit, society and economy. Application is majorly laid on decorating door,

window, umbrella, performing articles, home, religious ceremony and costume design [Fan, 2007, p.110; Wang, 2011, p.52]. Religious story, traditional legend, special ingredient, life scenery are predominate subjects for motif design, as shown in Figure 4.67. Auspicious patterns including botany and animals (elephant, peacock) are addressed to reveal the desire for happiness [Fan, 2007, p.112]. Buildings like temple, loft and religious tower are depicted. Singular colour is used in a graph. Red, yellow, blue, green, gold are manifested in celebration whereas white colour is adopted in funeral. It is worth mentioning that artists invent two types of paper, aluminum and shinny paper. In addition, gold foil and cloth are practiced as alternatives.



Figure 4.67 Examples of Yunnan style created by Hua Chun, Si

Source: reproduced from Xinhuanet.com [2010]



#### 4.6.18 Shanghai City

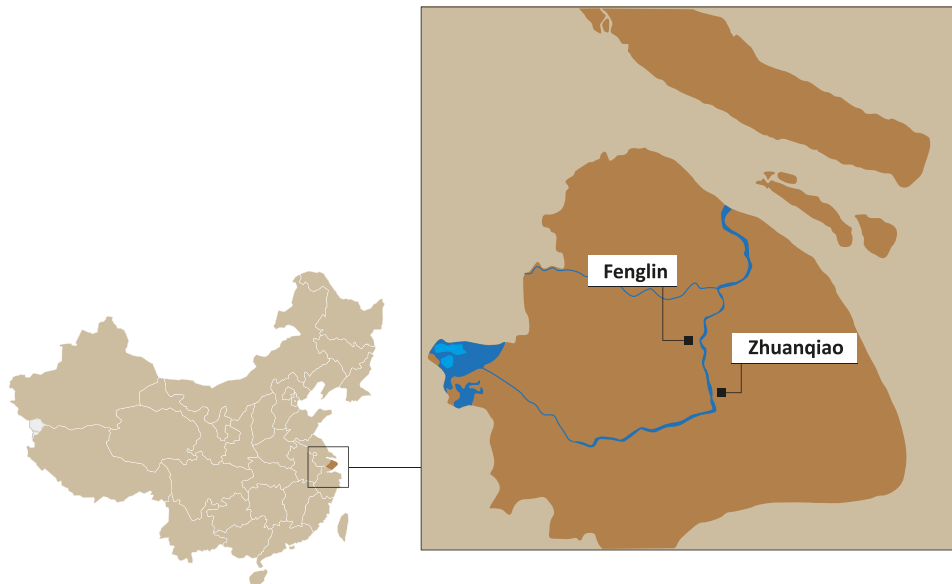


Figure 4.68 Map of Shanghai City

Hai style refers to a distinguished feature of paper cutting in Fenglin and Zhuanqiao City [Zhang, 2008, p.27]. In general the style is a mixture of tradition and western culture; a combination of north (bold imagery) and south (delicate lines) [Ming, 2008, p.78]. Also, modern feature of this urban city infuses new perspective to this traditional art [Zhu, 2010, pp.55-59]. In Fenglin, concept of Chinese painting is infused in addition to a combination of north (thin line) and south (bold imagery) style, as shown in Figure 4.69 [Cheng, 2012, p.85]. Variety of topics is illustrated including botany, bird, animals, natural scenery, life scenery, social incident, human figure and architecture. Whilst in Zhuanqiao, magnificent natural scenery is depicted mainly besides auspicious graphs such as botany and flowers, as illustrated in Figure 4.70. In this case perspective is highlighted to approach reality.



Figure 4.69 Example of Hai style created by Ming Xi, Lin  
Source: reproduced from Chou [2012, p.29]



Figure 4.70 Example of Hai style created by Ro Man, Chao  
Source: reproduced from Zhu [2010, p.129]

#### 4.6.19 Zhejiang



Figure 4.71 Map of Zhejiang

Referring to previous study that paper cutting art in Pujiang is originally used for religious articles [Hong and Lei, 2009, p.28]. Also, a folk habit states that it is essential for women to learn skills like embroidery and paper cutting before marriage. In this region, performing art like Chinese opera influences paper cutting art and works that depict opera characters is regarded have significant contribution in the field [Zhang, 2008, p.7]. Opera stories and folk legend are common subjects for motif design. It is interesting to note that when illustrate human figures, vivid scenes of background are depicted to match which results in a sense of Chinese painting, as shown in Figure 4.72 [Hong and Lei, 2009, p.26]. Various forms such as circle (the majority), rectangle, hexagon, octangle, organic and book shape can be seen in the style. The emphasis lies on infusing objects to graphs without leaving blank.

On the other hand, religious celebrations are popular in Zhejiang and activity like watching radiant lanterns is a new request for paper cutting art in terms of intricate and hollowing out

features. Especially in Yueching, paper cutting art originally is applied to designs of lampshade and is called ‘dragon lantern flower’ [Zhang, 2008, p.7; Ruan, 2009, p.29]. Also, ‘thin line carving’ is another name for the art results from the style is composed by hundreds types of abstract and geometric outlines. Furthermore, decorative frame and line-based layout are considered distinguished features [Cheng, 2010, p.6]. Besides simple geometric graphs, auspicious graphs like fish, rat, and grapes, opera characters, legend, and natural scenes are gradually illustrated to metaphor good wishes [Ruan, 2009, p.29]. In this case objects are put in the central surrounded by floral patterns, as shown in Figure 4.73.



Figure 4.72 Examples of Pujiang style created by Shan Zen, Wu

Source: reproduced from Chinese paper cutting educational net [2008]

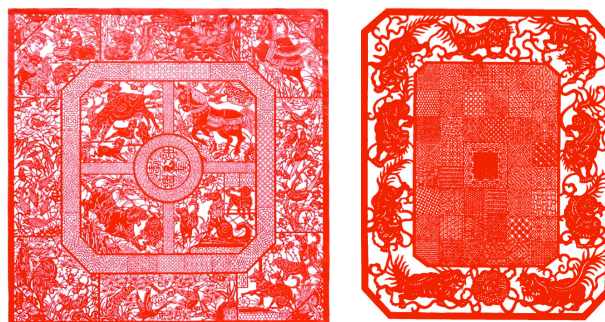


Figure 4.73 Examples of Yueching style

Source: reproduced from Yueching cultural museum [2011], Cheng [2010, p.75]

#### 4.6.20 Jiangxi

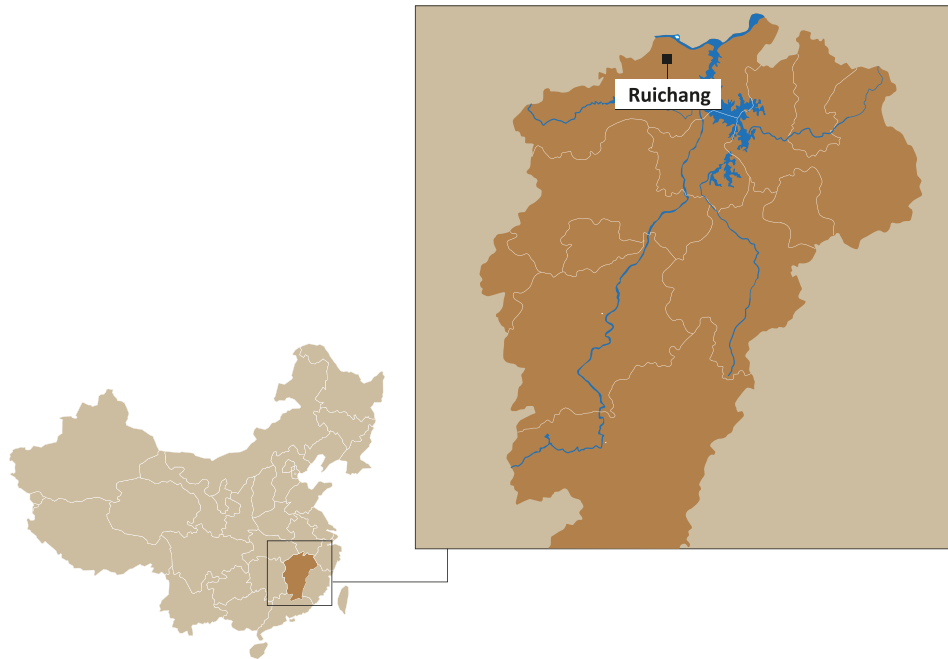


Figure 4.74 Map of Jiangxi

Referring to Shao and Xi [2006, p.38], Miu and Guo [2009, p.45] and Cai [2011, p.62] that paper cutting art starts from Han Dynasty. Initially the art is commonly used for religious articles and shoes and evolves to folk craft. The art is used as a means to celebrate festivals, show respect for ancestors and express blessing wishes for happy marriage. Works are mainly displayed during traditional festivals in attempt to ask for luck hence subjects like auspicious patterns (animal, botany, god) are manifested [Cai, 2011, p.64]. Also, art works are implemented on costume design [Shao, 2006, p.38]. Single object is shown in a single colour graph, as shown in Figure 4.75. It is worth mention that works look like cutting in one action without hollowing out [Cai, 2011, p.64; Zhang and Dong and Fan, 2009]. Works are purely followed by instincts; there is no restriction in realism, timeline or perspective. In addition, the art seems to be a criterion for choosing a wife [Shao and Xi, 2006, p.39]. According to local habit that brides have to showcase paper cutting works before weddings. As a result,

some artists are capable of doing the art without sketching in advance [Zhang and Dong and Fan, 2009].



Figure 4.75 Examples of Ruichang style created by Shi Ying, Liu  
Source: reproduced from Ruichang Message Net [2010]

#### 4.6.21 Hunan

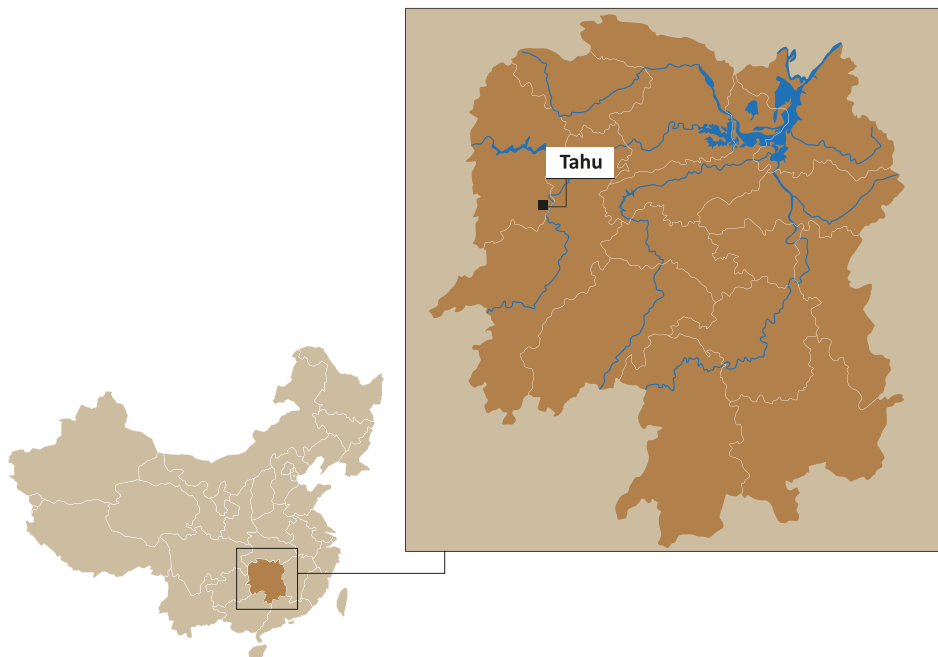


Figure 4.76 Map of Hunan

The region is famous for doing paper cuttings without scissor but carving knife solely. The style called ‘Tahu Chisel Flower’ is mainly practiced on embroidery. Various patterns derived from costumes of Miao Nationality and each design indicates distinct feature and significance. In this case the work of art preserves cultural imagery of ethnic nation. Graphs like animal and botany are illustrated on hat to avoid bad luck [Yong, 2005, p.101]. It is interesting to note that butterfly is worshiped as ancestor of Miao group, as the result the symbol is depicted the most in the area. On the other hand, when apply designs to clothes, the art becomes a sign to recognize a woman’s marital status, as shown in Figure 4.77. For example, a graph of one bird implicates single identity whereas a graph of two birds indicates a married condition. In terms of the size of applied object, patterns on shoes seem to be simple and symmetric. In this case birds and flowers are mostly depicted and each symbols men and women in attempt to imply love. In addition, red is shown in celebrations while white, yellow and blue are used in funerals.

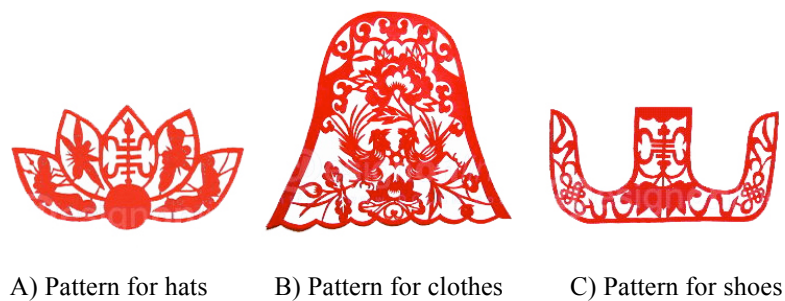


Figure 4.77 Examples of Tahu style created by Xing Long, Deng

Source: reproduced from Wu and Zhang [2010]

#### 4.6.22 Guizhou

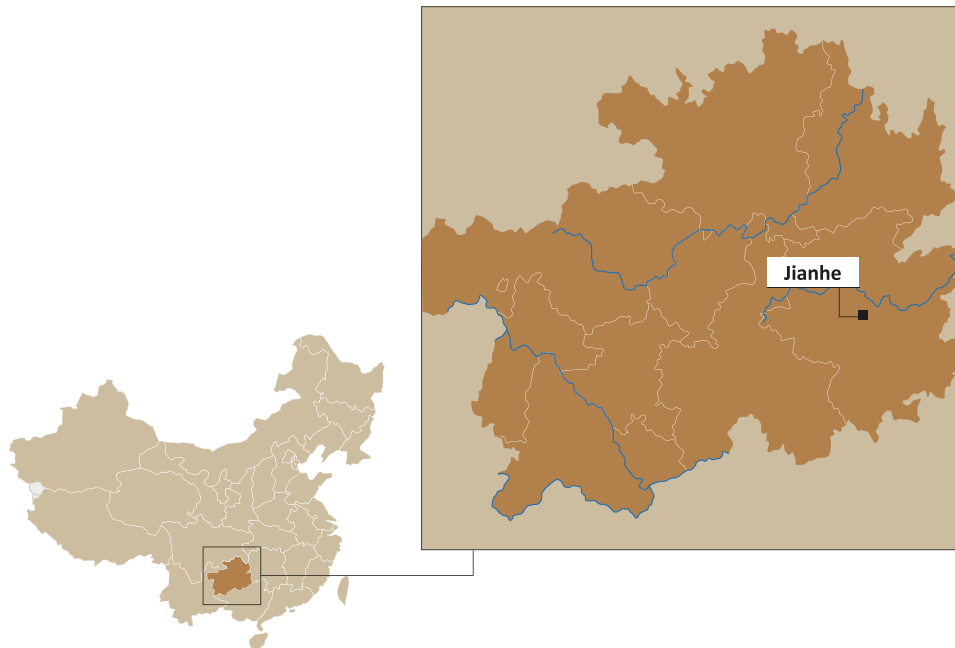


Figure 4.78 Map of Guizhou

Similar to Hunan, paper cutting art in Guizhou is called ‘Bun Xi’ used for embroidery mainly conducted by Miao group [Ting, 2008, p.22]. The nation is famous for aboriginal costume design contributed from paper cuttings [Zhou, 1992, p.201]. In terms of practical use (works are produced for needlework), there is no need to concern quality of paper or colour. In order to sew patterns on costumes easily, attention is paid on outlines. Consequently, works tend to be imaginative rather than realistic. Also, the style emphasizes more on the movement of object, as illustrated in Figure 4.79. Legendary story is mostly depicted as background to support connections between symbols [Ting, 2008, p.21].

In addition, Yang [2009, p.126] proposed four popular topics in this region include epic graphs for memorizing ancestors (butterfly, dragon, tiger, snake, elephant), folk stories, historic war scene and auspicious natural objects (roaster, bat, fish, sun, moon, mountain, river). It is interesting to note that butterfly is regarded as ancestor of Miao Nationality and



result in a great deal of application [Yang, 2009, p.127]. Also, various kinds of bird patterns appear in designs due to Miao group's adoration [He, 2005, p.52; Ting, 2008, p.22]. In terms of worship to life, ancestors and fertility, all of which are eternal subjects to the art. In addition, works illustrated life scenery become recorder to witness transformation of different times. Exaggerated and abstract shape and implication are considered special characters of the style.



Figure 4.79 Example of Guizhou style

Source: reproduced from Chen [2007]

#### 4.6.23 Fujian



Figure 4.80 Map of Fujian

In Quanzhou, paper cutting art begins with decoration for festivals. ‘Door label’ is regarded the most common form. Through modern development application expands broader to embroidery, pottery and paper sword. In terms of practical purpose, style appears to be decorative and detailed [Shu, 2005, p.11]. Also, in order to fit the need of local habit, such as lantern festival, the art turns out to collaborate with lantern design substantially, as shown in Figure 4.81. In this place, auspicious patterns like botany, bird and legendary figure are illustrated majorly to signal blessing significance.

Paper cutting art in Zhangpu initially is used for embroidery and gradually evolves to decorations in celebration and religious activities by immigrants of north and middle area. In this case the style preserves and innovates other area’s art features. Symbols that contain blessing meanings are illustrated the most. Also, according to Tu [2009, p.111] that aged professionals specialize in depicting life scenery (as shown in Figure 4.82) whereas young

artist focus on modernizing traditional imagery by illustrating social incidents. In this place traditional symbols are renewed as a result. Also, attempting to achieve new level, infusing other types of art forms and cultures seems to be a new measure. It is found that ideas are derived from Chinese painting, Japanese painting and western painting. Furthermore, outlines and pattern of sharp teeth are regarded identical features of the style.

Zherong style indicates a strong spiritual belief. Women pass down the skill to generations. The art is commonly used in celebration and regarded as a means to express true emotion as well as pursue for happiness. In this case life scenery, auspicious symbols and legendary figures are most illustrated. Various applications include window flower, decoration for gift-wrapping and embroidery for costume design. In terms of north location, style seems to be affected by Shaanxi and results in simple and aboriginal imagery. There is no sign of decorative effort but asymmetry and imaginative, as shown in Figure 4.83. Artists do cuttings without sketching in advance and ignoring realism [Yuan, 2007, p.66; Tu, 2012, pp.21-23].



Figure 4.81 Example of Quanzhou style created by Yao Bao, Li

Source: reproduced from Min Merchant [2010]



Figure 4.82 Example of Zhangpu style created by Qiu Ri, Chen

Source: reproduced from Lan [2009]



Figure 4.83 Example of Zherong style created by Xiu, Ying, Yuan

Source: reproduced from Craft114.com [2010]

#### 4.6.24 Guangdong

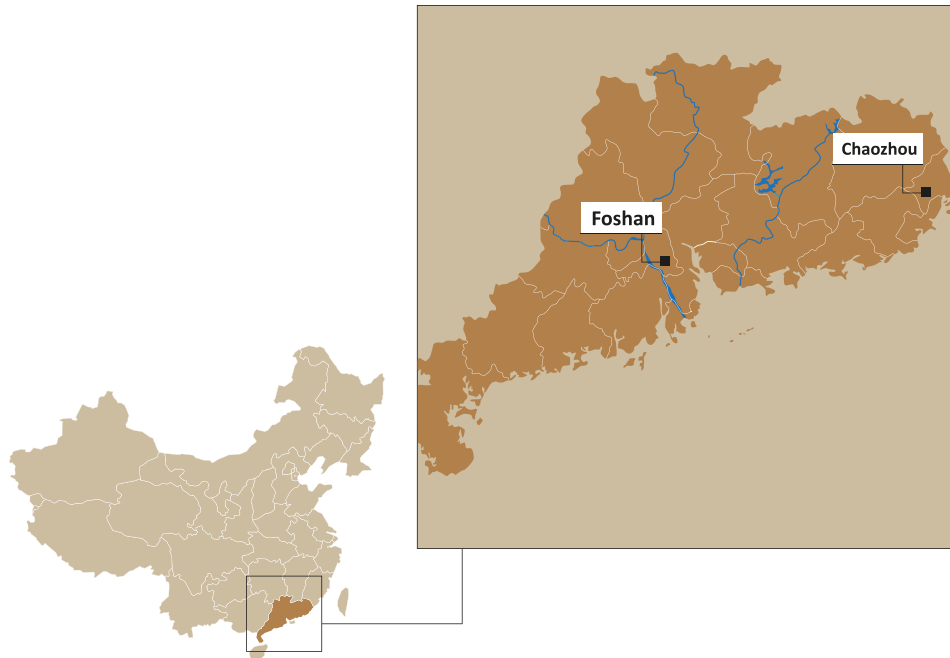


Figure 4.84 Map of Guangdong

Because of sea-front location, development of overseas trading in Chaozhou is vigorous which results in belief of god. Hence it is believed that the art is used for religious ceremony and festivals in the first place [Wu, 2007, p.64]. Also, women are considered to possess mellow skill of doing paper cuttings to earn good impression to men [Wu, 2007, p.64]. In terms of wet weather condition, paper cutting heritage is not preserved well [Ian and She, 2009, p.144]. History can be traced by relevant local art such as Chinese opera and leather-silhouette show, which influences design of human figure. Accordingly, it is worth noting that Chaozhou style is famous for depicting Chinese opera, as shown in Figure 4.85. Besides, legendary character and god, animal (domestic, aquatic and auspicious symbol), botany, fruit and vegetable are illustrated commonly to reflect life scenery [Ian and She, 2009, pp.146-147]. In addition, Wu [2008, p. 46] classified four features based on colour arrangement: single colour, a collage of multiple colours, a mixture of multi-colours outlined by gold and black, a combination of

carving and drawing. On the other hand, except advanced manufacture for paper, various kinds of material are experimented include gold and silver foil, cotton clothes, down, silk and plastic film. Furthermore, the art is applied to other traditional craft like pottery and lantern.

According to Ian and She [2009, p.6], paper cutting art in Foshan originates from Song Dynasty. Liang [2009, p.221] proposed the art is initially used for celebration and embroidery by uneducated women and evolves to various use produced by male professionals. Also, in terms of sea-front position, the art is traded overseas and transforms to a profitable cultural industry. On the other hand, referring to Yan [2008, pp.127-128] that Foshan style is influenced by other traditional art like pottery, carving craft (wooden, jade, stone, teeth), embroidery, and decoration for religious ceremony. Also, vigorous development of carving industry (tools are made specially) and innovation of new material (copper foil, plastic cloth and waterproof tape) contribute to involution, as illustrated in Figure 4.86 [Yan, 2008, p.129]. In addition, it is worth mentioning that ‘copper chisel’ (refers to using chisel to engrave copper) is regarded a unique technique in the area, as shown in Figure 4.87. As to aesthetic features of the region, Wang [2012] indicates four styles: symmetric composition, diverse selections of subjects (legend, historic story, Chinese opera, auspicious words, life scenery), bold imagery and decorative patterns.



Figure 4.85 Example of Chaozhou style created by Gen He, Jiang

Source: reproduced from Ian and She [2009, p.177]



Figure 4.86 Example of Foshan style created by Yong Cai, Chen

Source: reproduced from South Daily [2010], FOSHAN ARTS AND CRAFTS ASSOCIATION [2012-2013]



Figure 4.87 Illustration of copper chisel

Source: reproduced from GuangFo City Net [2010]

#### 4.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a concise review of the methods of classifying paper cutting styles in China. In attempt to obtain broad perspective, examples of measures are gathered from theme museums, laws authorised by government and previous study. Through the research it is discovered that criterion is vary according to conductors, and each of methods reveals insufficiency. For instance, the classification system adopted by China paper cutting museum is based one competition's awarding list. Hua-Xia paper cutting museum collects and samples



regional paper cutting works by curator's personal preference and knowledge. Furthermore, when looking at criterion used by government, attention is put more on local area's economic potential rather than aesthetic value. Therefore the investigation is worth taking in order to achieve practical side in addition to theoretical viewpoint. In this case exhibition of regional styles held by theme museum requires summarizing imagery and introduction. To begin with the new classification, lists of awarded styles and representatives organized by laws (authorities' acknowledgement) deliver comprehensive concept that is considered justified and trusty.

A visual analysis (Table 4.5) is conducted to make a clear understanding of variations between regional styles. The category of new classification system (Table 4.6) is based on previous study (the theoretical perspectives) in addition to government document including geography (area, nationality, weather, local resources), aesthetic feature (colour, shape, content, material, tool), socio-cultural custom (local habit, other art activities) and the end use. Also, a colour coded map (Figure 4.10) supplements geographic concept. Concerning the incomplete description and discussion of regional styles that paper cutting museums provide at the present time, the new classification provides a clear alternative or example for development of the existing schemes upon which museum rely.



## **5 Variations within regional paper cutting styles in China**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Folk art is a unique art form that represents a nation's culture and lifestyle. Compared with other types of art, this form of cultural activity is more greatly associated with people's daily life and is highly accessible in terms of tools and materials [Wang, 2007, p.117]. In China, paper cutting art is regarded as one of traditional art forms and popularly used to decorate home during festivals and celebrations. The design contains a great deal of traditional symbols, which embodies ancient history and cultural significance. However, since modernism influences the way of production in twenty century, it is inevitable for traditional art to evolve and innovate and involves in cultural industry. In this case, paper art seems to be transformed continuously due to the effects of local resources, different social, cultural and economic factors. Also, the production of the art is not only based on imitation and replication of typical patterns but also on invention and creativity. In order to discover the transformation of the art with modern society, cultural industry, an evaluation is undertaken through a variety of sphere including historical status, aesthetic perspective, educational organisation, economical and industrial value [Liu, 2012, pp.1-8].

The chapter addresses the following issues: What transformation of paper cutting art has been made? What are the causes to changes? To answer, attention draws on preservation and innovation. Referring to Jian Yang, Zhang, the curator of cultural museum in Zhangpu County (Fujian Province) that the development of paper cutting art appears significant difference between the north and the south of China. The study first divided areas into two spheres, north and south, focusing on development of many dimensions: government policy, aesthetic application (e.g. technique, material), creative industry (e.g. cooperation, marketing strategy) and preservation (e.g. museums, education); second, it highlights outstanding cases such as renowned historical sites, paper cutting museums, paper cutting studios and shops, innovated

styles and regional representatives; third, it discusses both positive and negative outcomes. In the end it suggests methods of innovation of traditional art in both aesthetic and pragmatic perspectives. This work is based on archival (previous study) and empirical (observation, interviews) research methods.

## **5.2 Political development**

In recent years the Chinese government has focused on protecting and developing cultural heritage. In order to encourage traditional culture and art a number of protective regulations, schemes and developmental awards have been introduced. One such award was the Ministry of Culture's "Township of Chinese folk culture and art", identifying that through innovation a certain art form has an influential impact on people's cultural and economic life and is regarded a mainstream in local area. The purpose of this award was to facilitate cultural movement, economic growth and arouse cultural consciousness. Paper cutting fell within the award category as "folk art" [MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2011].

Following participation in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2004, the Chinese government started working on protecting Chinese non-physical heritage and folklore. The state council approved the publications of the first and second version of intangible cultural heritage in 2006 and 2008, which comprise 1028 items and classified into ten categories. Ten categories include folk literature, traditional music, traditional dance, traditional theatre, vocal art, traditional sports, entertainment and acrobatics, traditional arts, traditional skills, traditional medicine and folk customs and paper cutting was classified into the field of traditional arts [Intangible Cultural Heritage in China, 2006]. Some local government below the provincial level also constitute according categories. An award for regional cultural heritage requires comprehensive information including capacity for implementing protection schemes and sufficient exhibition space. The popularity of the cultural activity in local area (both artistic and economic) is also considered.

The inheritors play crucial part in practicing and passing down cultural heritage. In addition to the scheme to document and preserve cultural heritage, in 2007 the Ministry of Culture elected individuals as representatives of national intangible cultural heritage, a regular scheme intended to stimulate and support long-term cultural inheritance. By 2009, 36 representatives who were considered influential in the field of paper cutting had been honoured to act as ambassadors and stimulate engagement in cultural tradition. A fairly comprehensive category and preservation system is now crystallised in China based on a principle of “putting preservation first, concentrating on salvation, making rational use and carrying on and developing China’s intangible cultural heritage.”

In an effort of reinforcing the idea of preservation of cultural heritage to general public, provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the central government have been building infrastructure such as museums and schools are set up for storing, displaying, studying and teaching.

Apart from the effort contributed from government policy, art organisations takes part in the work of safeguarding by launching relative national competitions and exhibition. In 1950, “Chinese folk literature and art society”, established in Beijing, consists of variety field of expertise, is considered one of leading force in the field [Chinese Folk Literature and art Society, 2013]. Determining to arise the importance of cultural preservation and increase knowledge and awareness, art interactions such as international exhibition, performance and theme competition are carried out in addition to theoretical publication and research work. It is worth mentioning that results of paper cutting competition contributing to introduction of regional styles by donating winning pieces to museums. The institution offers opportunity to the public to participate in correlative activities to gain experiences that illuminate personal relevance.

It is worth noting that prize medals and certificates of theme competition and authorized evaluation are often displayed in the studio and shop to earn acknowledged appreciation, as shown in Figure 5.1. Additionally, winning pieces are eligible being duplicated and sell in high value relatively in terms of the prestige.



Figure 5.1 Illustration of awarded certificate and prize medal displayed in studios (shops)

### 5.3 Development of historical sites

In accordance with increasing globalization, communities are starting to appreciate primitive identity, culture, traditional art forms and the value of cooperation at a local standard [Kay, 2000, p.1]. In this place arts are gradually regarded considerable elements to regenerate areas. In order to amplify the potential of art to incite citizens' interests in art participation, government has a role to facilitate the movement of development by means of constituting according law.

Hebei, the capital province, is awarded “Township of Chinese folk culture and art” in 1993 [Ministry of Culture, 2011] and considered the most renowned example of possessing substantial quantity of traditional symbols of the art regarding to the continuous development since Qing Dynasty [Lee and shou, 2006, p112]. In terms of center location consisted of diverse cultures, a wide range of art forms have been cultivated including opera, songs, dancing, music, handicraft and acrobatics and each of them influences one and another. For instance, Chinese opera figures are depicted substantially and regarded iconic feature of the

region [Wang, 2006, p.75]. Annual painting has a great impact on formulation of paper cutting art [Wang, 2006, p.73; Lee and Shou, 2006, p.29]. Also, content design of paper cutting mirrors dynamic form of art comprising traditional symbols, historical stories, folk legend, local habit, and opera figures and attributes to approximately six thousand categories as a result. Moreover, colouring and carving techniques developed exclusively in this region have been highly recognized and appreciated in the field, as shown in Figure 5.2.

As mentioned that in the last two decades there has been an increased interest in the effective economic value of cultural and creative industries. Chinese government draws up the sector by constituting laws and awards to encourage reinvention of traditional art and economic activities accordingly. With profound history and vigorous development, styles of Fengning and Yu County represented in Hebei province are awarded “Township of Chinese paper cutting art” in 2003. In 2010, a street in Yu County (the western of Hebei province, as illustrated in Figure 5.3) is awarded “Chinese paper cutting street” as a platform for artists to showcase creativity. Attempting to stimulate the industry, the street is filled with forty-one studios also shops gathered from local to nationwide to display unique style (design, technique or material). Also, in order to enhance importance of art promotion and trading market, local government launches national exhibition and activities regularly.

To investigate actual scenery of “Chinese paper cutting street”, the study is followed up with a field trip. Findings obtained when observation carried out in 2011. The street is well decorated with a noticeable sign, situated in the center of the county, seems to be a tourist attraction and prosperous market, as shown in Figure 5.4. With forty-ones shops showcase a variety of style, the place offers a great deal of creative views. Also, various collections allow visitors to comprehend ethical creativity and innovative interpretation. The inclination that artists materialize the art with new perspectives provides inspiration for relative practitioners. For instance, in terms of the fragile material paper cutting art is made of, the growing

attention is put on developing sustainable replacement. Perspective composition is experimented to give a different angle to the flat, two-dimension art.

Despite of positive signals of suggestion for creativity, a number of challenges occur on realistic side. The ideal principle of the street is to represent a variety of diverse development of paper cutting and attribute to economic boost in local area, hence the setting is expected to fill with welcoming ambience. However, the place reveals unapproachable, which may result from the effort of protecting intellectual property rights, methods of protection adopted here including keeping doors shut or cover works with advertisement board. It is worth mentioning that in terms of competitive atmosphere, tension arises when visitors only pay interests in particular shops and receiving unfriendly attention from the rest of shop owners as a result. As to the surrounding, it pertains to an undeveloped town than a civilized city. The existing of the street seems incompatible. Additionally, due to difficulty of traveling (no direct flight), it is rare to see trace of tourists unless national exhibitions and special events are held in the area.

During the time of filed trip in Yu County, attention is also draw on “The first paper cutting community”. The place is fifteen minutes distant to the center of town, as shown in Figure 5.3. From the background story the community consists of twenty-eight neighbors and produces the art professionally [Wu, 2010, p.51]. It is estimated that over one thousand habitants engaged in the industry and contribute for about two billion RMB a year. According to report the town seems to be a realm of creativity, however, the actual environment appears barren and lived mostly by old generation, as shown in Figure 5.5.

In terms of less demanding in technological invention, the focus of the industry lies on local resources and traditional knowledge. Due to the cost of the labour force and training course involved, shops remain in small scope. Accordingly, combining both working studio and home seems a popular tendency, as shown in Figure 5.6. Also, most paper cutting shop

owners manage creative thinking and the business at the same time. Comparing to creative side of knowledge, the strategy towards business appears inadequate relatively. Nevertheless, in an effort to expand potential of market, the idea of trading products at world level has initiated artisans to innovate while maintaining traditional features. In this case, a trend of articulating legendary story and opera figures into content design is discovered in relation to facilitate cultural exchange.



Figure 5.2 Illustration of renowned carving and colouring skills in Yu County (Hebei province)

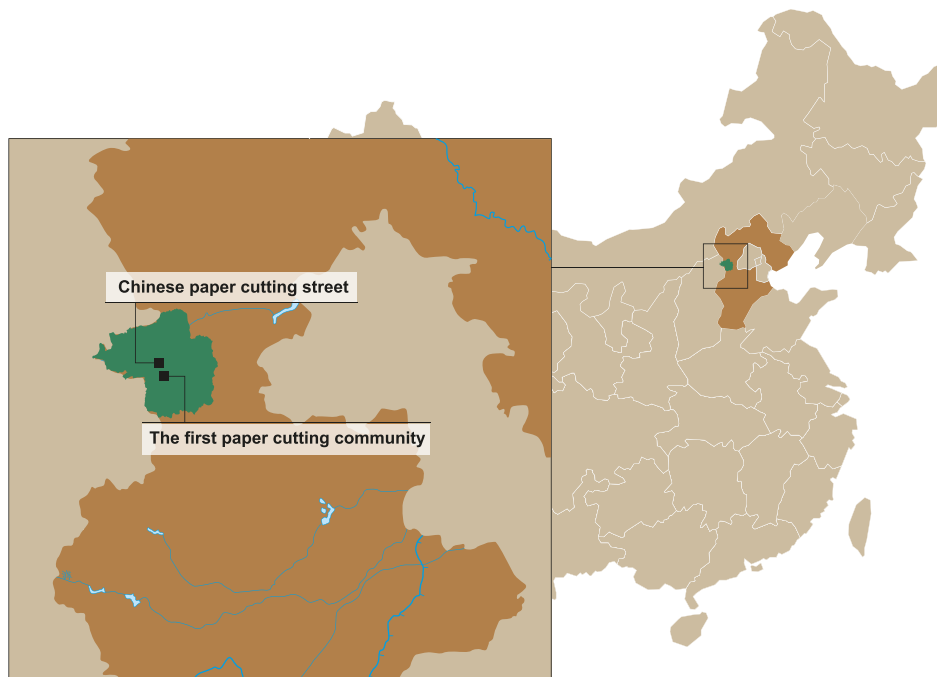


Figure 5.3 Illustration of Yu County (Hebei province)





Figure 5.4 Illustration of “Chinese paper cutting street”



Figure 5.5 Illustration of “The first paper cutting community”





Figure 5.6 Illustration of paper cutting shops in Yu County

#### 5.4 Aesthetical and economical development

Previous studies have proposed that a combination of factors such as geographic differences (e.g. mountain or river regions and weather), aesthetic approach (e.g. materials and cutting techniques), and regional cultural diversity, all contribute to the diversity of paper cutting styles. Often researchers have employed broad geographic boundaries as a means for distinguishing between the various paper cutting styles that have developed [Jiang, 2009]. The method of distinguishing paper cutting styles into north and south style has been discussed in Chapter 4, which is based on geography. In theory that cultures cultivated near the Yellow River basin is considered to represent the north fraction, whereas south style refers to culture developed near the Changjiang River, as shown in Figure 5.7. The general idea of northern style is more of bold lines and exaggerated composition compared to the south, which represents delicate smooth outline [Bai and Yu, 2009, Wang].

The phenomenon that paper cutting art has been reinterpreting to high value and sophisticate collection in recent years may due to the intention to improve the status of folk art which has

been underestimated in terms of accessibility. Measures of transformation adopted in the north and the south appear differently result from the effects of geography, native resources, traditional knowledge, application and cultural behavior. It is discovered that work of art contains substantial proportion of traditional pattern and is in favor of texture of paper in the north part of China may due to completion of preservation in relation to dry weather condition underpin by evidence of earliest paper cutting heritage discovered in Xingjiang province (the north-west China) [Lee and Shao, 2006, p.10; Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.8]. Also, inconvenience of travel attributes to maintain conventional life styles, which enables people to practice the art continuously [Liang and Liu, 2011, p.168]. In this case Gansu, Shanxi, Anhui, Shaanxi, Hebei, Shandong provinces are considered inclusive [Wang, 2006, pp.78-81]. Shaanxi province, in particular, embodies a great deal of traditional symbols conveying historical knowledge thus the style is acknowledged as living fossil [Bai and Yu, 2009, p.25]. It is worth mentioning that Hebei and Shandong province, each develops unique colouring and cutting techniques base on tradition and creativity.

With numbers of ethnic groups feature distinct styles in terms of cultural diversity, paper cutting art in the north is identified possessing both traditional and unique features in the scope of aesthetic view. For instance, work of art reflects scenery of nomadic life style in Inner Mongolia. Similarly, artists in Jilin province manifest ethnic costume and local habit through creations. The worship of goodness in Man Nationality attributes to the cause of depicting woman figure in Liaoanng province. In Ningxia province, ethnic groups such as Hui Nationality and Islam influence the trend of content design. Additionally, it is interesting to note that politic-oriented subjects such as national events or mortal manifesto are often articulated to deliver virtuous consciousness may be relevant to the capital province is situated in the north.

To the extent of aesthetical development, the paradigm of transformation in the north refers to remaining traditional concept in the aspect of content design and two-dimensional style. The

emphasis of regenerating ideas in the area lies on technical aspect such as the layout, composition and colour arrangement. For instance, Bao Fon Lee, a Jilin-based artist, reinterprets scenery of local habit with western view. In order to rebuild the impression of the art, infusing concept of traditional Chinese painting and oil painting by mediums of perspective composition and dynamic hues respectively. In addition to manifest effect of cut-hollowing in traditional way, collage and paper sculpture technique are combined to accomplish different level. In this place work of art embodies multiple characteristics. From examples showed in Figure 5.8, it is clear to see differences between traditional and innovative style. In order to allocate the art into productive asset, a firm consisting of a thousand artists is formulated to accelerate business. It is worth noting that to approach people's need, the firm offers customize service. Additionally, the artist involves in improving the quality of paper in relation to reach high standard. To introduce the brand to the public an official museum is under the construction.

It is worth mentioning that package design is unveiled to be another emphasis in the area in order to achieve a market niche in competitive environment. In this place a piece of art is produced into a form of book, a roll of painting or framed by decent material, as shown in Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.10. In this place paper cutting has been transformed from folk art to sophisticated art collection and magnificent gift selection. In addition, to approach foreign market, participating in international trading activities and exhibition seems to be the efficient measure.

Comparing to the emphasis is majorly concentrated on preservation in the north, paper cutting seems to be transformed dramatically from the south relatively. The intention to infuse different perspectives is discovered and results in dynamic development in both aesthetic and economic dimensions. Referring to Akrich, Callon and Latour [2002, p.208] that an innovation may be interpreted into creating relation between various associates and strengthening the subject's genuine qualities. As mentioned weather condition is considered

one of attribute to alternation thus product of paper cutting remains in the production of paper in the north whereas in the south modification is made by invention of material. In order to compete domestic and international markets, measures adopted including experimenting with different materials, generating fresh ideas to content design and cooperating with other art form. Influential factors like local resource and wet weather condition initiate the invention of new materials. Figure 5.11 shows example of paper cutting product in general market made of velvet attached by adhesive function. Also, metal like gold, silver foil, copper are utilized to the design, Foshan (Guangdong province) style, in particular, is regarded most renowned example in the field [Wang, 2007, p.95]. In a degree of giving rise to different creative industry structures, paper cutting art involves with local habit. Previous studies show a combination of paper cutting with lantern design for Lantern Festival in Yueching city (Zhejiang province) and Quanzhou city (Fujian province) indicates potential of developing different genre and market.

As mentioned paper cutting art in the southern part of china has been redefined in many dimensions. Experimenting with new material, in particular, is regarded one of the measure to the transformation. A Guangdong-based artist Yun Chai Chen, utilizes local metal material (gold and copper foil) to replace paper and creates large scale of work, is considered the representative example in the field, as illustrated in Figure 5.12. In order to make the use of the material, skills and tools of articulating intricate imagery onto metals have been developed accordingly that contributes to establish the brand of the region. However, faced with the shortage of metal material (copper) in recent years [Ian and Xie, 2009, p.66], in order to remain unique technique and style, the artist prevails searching for metal material from other regions.

Shifting from traditional symbol to creative subjects in design aspect relating to the desire for creative achievement to stand out from the similarity. In the scope of Fujian province, Yan Chun Oyan creates a paper cutting version of western painting “the last super”, as shown in

Figure 5.13. Shao Ping Kao, replaces red with different hue regarding to the suggestion obtained in an exhibition took place in German where considers colour of red symbols blood and evolution. On the other hand, in relation to innovative forms, Shu Ron Lu produces clocks by applying the imagery of the art, as shown in Figure 5.14. While in Zhejiang and Fujian province, the art shares similarity of associating with lampshade and lantern design to meet needs of local custom.

It is worth addressing that in Quanzhou city (Fujian province), a lantern design competition for Lantern Festival, which is held in February and officially marks the end of the Spring Festival followed by according exhibition showcases creativity in arcade area, facilitates cultural consciousness, as shown in Figure 5.15. Yao Bao Lee, a pioneer of combining paper cutting with lantern design in the field, a formal constructor, awarded representative, initiates the concept to preserve traditional elements of authentic architecture in the period of cultural evolution, followed by applying the knowledge to shape lanterns with skill of paper cutting [Lee, 2004, pp.8-15; Wang, 2007, p.111]. In this case paper is the only material adopted, each piece of paper cutting is used as a component to constitute a lantern, as illustrated in Figure 5.16. In this case more than one traditional culture has been remained through creative implementation. However, works of the master had been burned out during the cultural evolution and skill had been passed down to Lee's family members [Lee, 2004, p.12]. Granddaughter of the master Li Fon Huang, an awarded representative in local area, runs lantern and paper cutting business in current, as shown in Figure 5.17. In order to stand out from lantern design competition, specific pattern design (e.g. botany, animal) is created every year. Also, colourful glass paper is employed to achieve flamboyant effect. As a result, product is highly recognizable and in terms of inherited prestige, the price of commodity reaches the highest among the market. In addition to persist traditional concept, Huang endeavors to experiment new materials such as disposable paper (e.g. leaflet, wrapping), as shown in Figure 5.18.

In addition, comparing to tools made specified according to artisans' needs in the north (as shown in Figure 5.19), accessible tools, which can be found in grocery shop are more likely to be utilized in the south, as illustrated in Figure 5.20. The scenario conveys the idea that folk-art should be approachable to practice. Also, in terms of the application of the art inclines to be pragmatic use in the south, advanced cutting machine such as laser cutting is mostly employed to achieve effective economic value.



Figure 5.7 Illustration of generalised classification of paper cutting art

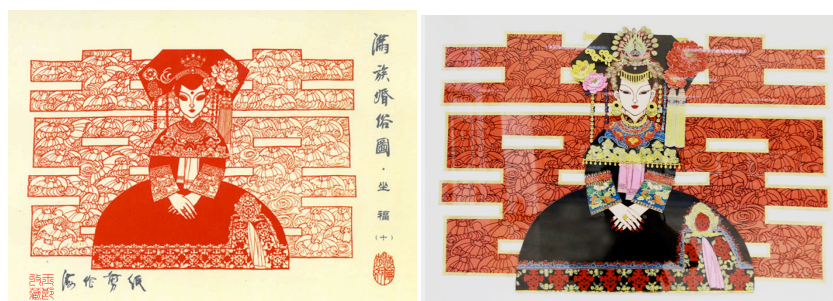


Figure 5.8 Examples of innovation of Jilin style

Source: reproduced from Wang [1993, p.158]





Figure 5.9 Examples of innovation from Hebei province



Figure 5.10 Example of innovation from Shanghai city

Source: reproduced from Zhu [2012, p.53]



Figure 5.11 Illustration of paper cutting product in the market



Figure 5.12 Illustration of work produced by Yun Chai Chen

Source: reproduced from GuangFo City Net [2010]





Figure 5.13 Example of innovative content design created by Yan Chun, Oyan



Figure 5.14 Example of innovative content design created by Shu Ron, Lu



Figure 5.15 Illustration of lantern festival in Quanzhou city



Figure 5.16 Illustration of lantern design combined with paper cutting

Source: reproduced from Lee [2004, pp.142-143]





Figure 5.17 Illustration of studio of Li Fon, Huang



Figure 5.18 Illustration of works of Li Fon Huang



Figure 5.19 Illustration of paper cutting tools used in Yu County

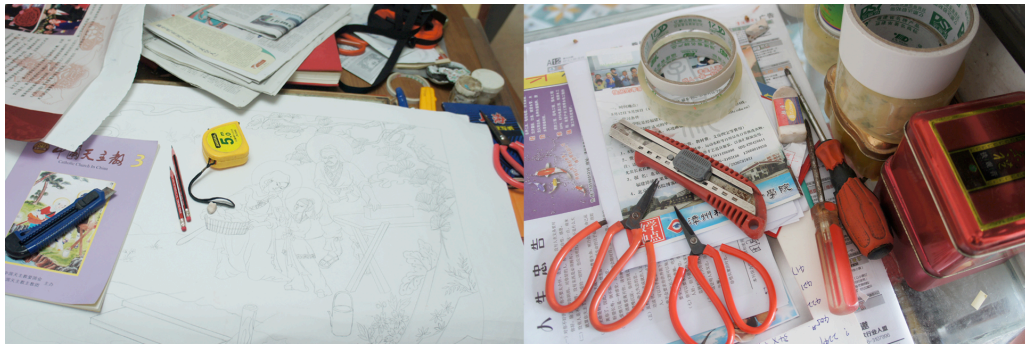


Figure 5.20 Illustration of paper cutting tools used in Fujian province

## 5.5 Educational development

To continue addressing the development of preservation, the importance of cultural organizations such as museums and galleries should not be neglected. The nature and functional dimension of museums consists of education, interpretation and communication [Song, 2007, p.371]. It is of value to a broad range of audiences and bears great educational potential by means of formal learning, self-directed learning and family learning. In recent years, the educational role of museums evolves to more diverse spheres, to include exhibitions, displays, events and workshops [Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, p.3]. Also, with the growing attention given to creative economy, museums may not be thought of as market place, but associates with the economic role consequently. In order to discover the development of paper cutting art museum in China, an investigation is undertaken. Concerning the volume of theme museum (as illustrated in Figure 5.21 and Table 5.1) and accessibility of travel, the

scope of following discussion is narrowed to most representative example (regarding to national recognition) to address the innovative service (e.g. teaching, exhibition, activity, facility, marketing strategy). Findings are based on empirical and archival research method.

The definition of private museum refers to a non-governmental governed organisation. It is a museum that conducted by a group or personal unit [Song, 2003, p.98]. Hua-Xia paper cutting museum was founded by scholar, artist and curator, Shih Jia Chin, is considered the first according institution in the field, as shown in Figure 5.21, coding no.1 [Yu, 2005, p.30]. The building is a three- floor apartment organizing into three galleries located on a main road. Exhibition starts from first floor whereas ground floor is used for a printing business managed by Chin's family. The first section focuses on introduction of historical background, brief regional styles and method of production, as shown in Figure 5.22; the second section exhibits theoretical resources (e.g. books, newspaper, booklet, journal paper) and a series of tool and numbers of regional representative works. While in the third section compasses a small library comprising eight hundred publications collected by curator, as shown in Figure 5.23.

Comparing to the museum held by government, private one is tend to manifest collectors' collections and accessibility [Song and Lee, 2007, p.19]. The collection has been selected from numerous sources based on the curator's professional knowledge and documented according to province and renowned artist. Although the diversified collection lacks systematic coding, the varied styles developing within one region and the evolution of certain regional styles is evident. The collection is updated continuously and more than one example is available for one style. Although there is scepticism regarding the value of the collection, the method implemented by Chin has resulted in a comprehensive collection and won a fine reputation in the field.

It is undoubtedly that private museums may encounter more challenges like prestige, functional service, regulation and accidental incident [Song and Lee, 2007, p.12]. In terms of insufficient economic support, the place is lack of techniques of controlling the environment to prevent from potential damaging effects of light, humidity and air pollution, as shown in Figure 5.24. Also, classification system adopted here reveals inadequacy. Moreover, concerning the shortage of librarian, the museum may encounter management problem in the future.

On contrary, China paper cutting museum in Yongzhou city (Jiangsu province), built by local government and enterprise in 2007, is regarded first official paper cutting museum in China, as shown in Figure 5.21, coding no.2. The three- floor, authentic building is located in an unsophisticated district, where is used to live by famous salt merchant (the backyard garden of Wang family), as illustrated in Figure 5.25. While exhibiting the historical background and local artists' works, regional styles are introduced in the opposite gallery begins with a map of China with pointed provinces and cities signal unique style followed by a series of representative collection, as shown in Figure 5.26. Also, theoretic inferences are provided for scholars and researchers. It is interesting to note that a number of politic-oriented paper cutting works are displayed to propagate patriotism, as shown in Figure 5.27.

Unlike the classification system used in Hua-Xia museum based purely on curator's profession, the approach adopted in China paper cutting museum is according to "The Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society". The organisation comprised of a group of renowned artists and professionals from different subject areas. Representative works are selected through regional competition organised by the Society and are therefore gathered from a single resource. Although winning competition entries provide examples of regional paper cutting styles, these may not adequately reflect the local identity and style of work. Additionally, regional styles may be overlooked if artists do not participate in the competitions and examples for each of the styles noted are not available.

Aiming to introduce the art to the public, measures like holding theme activities (e.g. exhibition and competition) and publishing relative inferences are adopted in this case [Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society, 2001-2008]. Also, the concept of teaming up with local artists giving seasonal classes to the public facilitates educational interaction. In addition, cultural tourist's intention to connect local culture as well as ethical consumerism is considered in this place. Therefore, a gift shop is set up on the ground floor to offer various kinds of paper cutting product to the extent of cultural exchange. In this case the art is transformed into merchandise such as lampshades, postcards, and framed into scroll paintings and packaged into books, as illustrated in Figure 5.28. The store exemplifies of the potential development of a traditional art by means of compiling innovative works from local to nationwide. In this case, the museum takes advantage of "Museum marketing" to assure the value of the place, in an effort to satisfy anticipations from visitors [Lewis, 1991, Song, 2007, p.267].

The place is not meant to be a tourist attraction but welcomes researchers or people acknowledge the art. Also, the shop provides a platform for art practitioners to showcase works and understand capability. Besides, the use of an official website enables viewers to understand the implementation of the organisation and also useful for museum to approach actual and potential audiences.

Comparing to above-mentioned museum, Guangling paper cutting museum in Shanxi province (Figure 5.21, coding no.7) achieves a complete system to the extent of preservation and innovation. The museum exhibits works of local artists and regional styles donated by "The Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society". Besides museum, a cultural industrial park, as shown in Figure 5.29, is established consisting of a research center of Guangling paper cutting art, a professional training school and Guangling cultural and art development Co. Ltd, all of which deal with sector-specified programs: the museum relating to markets and

business, training school correlating to education, research center associating with the development of innovation while production constitutes the core of the firm.

In an effort of expanding the development of the art, the museum associates with different spheres such as fabric art and craft (e.g. pottery, crystal, glass container). Also, publish relative inferences in a degree of theoretical contribution and construct official website to gain publicity. To integrate tourist industry with creative industry and to conform local style to tradition, the research center puts emphasis on souvenir design, as illustrated in Figure 5.30. In this place the dedication to produce high-quality product to pursue the niche in local and international markets accomplishes an outstanding achievement in the field. To the extent of passing down the knowledge, the training school recruits approximately 2000 students in current and is considered the first institution in the area. As to the degree of invention, the company has developed a thousand style and template of design. Numbers of works have been published the intellectual property rights.

The realm of paper cutting art is initiated by local leading artist Duo Tang Zhang then is recognized and supported by Chinese government and awarded “The foundation of national cultural creative industry” in terms of the commercial, institutional, economical practices and the potential for future development. The implementation of interaction between tourists and art practitioner has been fully operated by hosting paper cutting festivals, exhibition to nation and worldwide.

Aiming to preserve and introduce cultural integrity and ethnicity of the community, Helingeer paper cutting museum in Inner Mongolia province (Figure 5.21, coding no.13), specifies the history and development of the art in local area. The infrastructure consists of eight galleries to explicitly exhibit works like the history of paper cutting art in Inner Mongolia, ancient heritages (e.g. tools, art pieces) and works of native artists. Exhibited works are chosen by the curator, Jian Chun Duan, the representative of the style, the president of paper cutting society



of Inner Mongolia, dedicates to research and protect the art. In this place the design of the art reflects distinct characteristics such as natural scene, nomadic life style, raw materials and ethnicity. It is interesting to note that in order to carry out the unique life style and traditional habit, scenery of living environment has been installed into the exhibition, as shown in Figure 5.31. Referring to Staniszewski [1998] that installation seems synonymous to creation to represent sectors like value, philosophy, politics and aesthetics. In this case not only the work of art have been exhibited but also the ethnic culture. To the extent of the impact of display, comprehending the knowledge of the art by means of experiencing atmosphere of reality-based surroundings attributes to an impressive learning experience.

Apart from the contribution of preservation made by paper cutting museums, it is revealed that individual artist also takes part in the movement of passing down traditional knowledge to new generation. Getting involved with teaching role in studios and local schools seems to be feasible approach while working on creations. A Fujian-based artist Shu Ron Lu, teaches paper cutting lessons in the day time while creates paper cuttings off the work. The artist starts the lesson with a series of colourful carton imagery to incite young beginners' interests, followed by advanced module consisted of intricate traditional patterns, as shown in Figure 5.32. With the experience of participating national paper cutting competition, the intention of understanding the traditional art grows fonder.



Figure 5.21 Illustration of paper cutting museums in China

Table 5.1 Paper cutting museums in China

Code	Name	Year of origin	Founder	Location	Type of work	Size of collection	Features
1	Hua-Xia Paper cutting museum	2000	Private	Hunan Province	Regional style and curator's work	10000	The first paper cutting museum
2	China Paper cutting museum	2002	Government	Yongzhou City, Jiangsu Province	Regional and local style	500	The first official paper cutting museum
3	Yi-Jian, Wen-Xi	2002	Private	Zhoquan county,	Artist's works	2000	First family

	a Paper gallery			Shanxi Province			style showcase
4	“Shannbei aunt” Paper Cutting Gallery	2005	Private	Shannxi Province	Artist’s works	10000	A trademark is set up
5	Yantai Paper Cutting Museum	2006/9	Yantai City, Shandong Province	Local style	40000	Yantai Paper Cutting Museum	
6	Man Nationality Paper Cutting art Gallery	2007/4	Private	Fengning County, Hebei Province	Local style	7000	5
7	Guangling Paper Cutting Museum	2007	Government	Guangling County, Shanxi Province	Regional and local style	1600	•The biggest site in the field (school+ Research center+ Studio)
8	Chai Zi, Hu Paper Cutting art Gallery	2009/11	Private	Tunglu County, Zhejiang Province	Artist’s works	103	

9	Pin Ying, Chou Paper Cutting gallery	2010	Private	MiZi County, Shannxi Province	Artist's works	6000	
10	Jinhua Paper Cutting Museum	2011	Government	Jinhua City, Zhejiang Province	Local style	1500	
11	Yen-Han Paper Cutting art Gallery	2011/9	Private	Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province	Artist's works	100	
12	Cai-Hua, Xie Paper Cutting art Museum	2011/10		Zhejiang Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Local style</li> <li>•Cai Hua Xie's work</li> <li>•Works represent the idea of honest and incorruption</li> </ul>	15000	The first national paper cutting gallery (school+ Research center+ Studio)
13	Helingeer Paper Cutting Museum	2012/1		Helingeer County, Inner Mongolia Province	Local style and personal collection	50000	
14	Jinshun	2012/6		Shaoyi	Local style	600	

	Paper Cutting Museum			City, Shanxi Province			
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Figure 5.22 Illustration of Hua-Xia paper cutting museum



Figure 5.23 Illustration of displays in Hua-Xia paper cutting museum



Figure 5.24 Illustration of Hua-Xia paper cutting museum



Figure 5.25 Illustration of China paper cutting museum





Figure 5.26 Illustration of China paper cutting museum



Figure 5.27 Illustration of China paper cutting museum



Figure 5.28 Illustration of China paper cutting museum



Figure 5.29 Illustration of Guangling paper cutting cultural industrial park

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [p.28], Guangling paper cutting art museum [2009]





Figure 5.30 Examples of innovative paper cutting product

Source: reproduced from Zhang and Zhang [pp.50-51]



Figure 5.31 Illustration of Helingeer paper cutting museum

Source: reproduced from tudou.com [2012]



Figure 5.32 Illustration of teaching materials

## 5.6 Summary

China is a nation comprised of 56 nationalities that have created great depth and variation in the cultural heritage of the country. Paper cutting art, a popular folk art, has been awarded national heritage status by the Chinese government. In an effort to preserve traditional knowledge the Chinese Ministry of Culture has been gradually setting up a fairly comprehensive system over the past few years. Measures adopted include a nationwide survey of cultural heritage, a system of awarding representatives and the establishment of museums and schools. As a consequence the efforts have contributed to many areas of Chinese society including cultural preservation, education and economic support. Similarly, local government and art societies, dedicated to stimulate interest of protection of traditional art, host national competitions, conferences and exhibitions. Also, international visiting tours are arranged to achieve cultural interaction alongside publications to aid preservation.

However, through the process of active surveys for discovering regional representatives, it has become apparent that this area of cultural heritage is facing difficulty in relation to preservation. The majority of paper cutting masters are elderly the skill is often not passed on successfully due to the lack of appeal in terms of economical reward. The value of paper cutting products is unable to achieve a high monetary value unless the creator is renowned. Also, due to the complexity of the work, results are time consuming to achieve and these factors often deter the younger generation who are more attracted to industries. To deal with the obstacle, local government, enterprise and research institutions have established specific

training schools. Also, reconstruction of the price to different levels according to quality has been undertaken in order to meet different market demands. In terms of the successful example in the Yu County, a great deal of economical gain has been displayed by the industry and many other practitioners are encouraged to follow this pattern.

On the other hand, it is discovered that the art is being continuously transformed according to the effects of different geography, culture and application. Variables in design occur in relation to local custom, raw material, creative concept and unique technique and result in dynamic development [Liang and Liu, 2011, p.168]. Also, with the increased interest in the effective economic value of cultural and creative industries, producing new samples while maintaining traditional characteristics becomes the inevitable task of art practitioners competing on the market. As a result paper cutting artists have been experimenting with different spheres. Examples including combining intricate patterns with daily articles (e.g. clocks, lanterns) to reinterpret the form of the art, refreshing the past impressions of the art form and infusing different cultures and concepts (e.g. western painting, paper sculpture), while inventing and improving material to sustain the usage.

Behind efforts made by art practitioners to innovation, numbers of problems occur accordingly. Faced with accelerated pace of industrialization and commercialization, a consequence of mass duplication and imitation occurs consequently. In terms of the accessibility of tools and material to produce the art, works are easy to copy. In this case, artists are cautious to choose the medium when selling products. For instance, posting works on the Internet may not only get the publicity but also encounter the danger of plagiarism. In terms of the volume of the design, it is not feasible to apply intellectual property right for each design. Therefore, in order to protect copyright, artists tend to sell average level works on virtual shop and promote sophisticate collections in studios and physical stores.

Through interviews with artists, the intention of upgrading the status of paper cutting art has been explained. The traditional concept of folk art pertains to a medium of entertainment and the value of paper cutting art has long been underestimated. Also, due to the accessibility of tools and materials, the price of art works has struggled to rise. To deal with this barrier, artists have attempted to produce different standards of work. Limited edition pieces relate to sophisticated and unique design whereas works incline to appeal to the average taste are intended to meet the demands of mass production. In this case, the price of the commodity is modified reasonably taking into regard to the quality of the work. These measures enable distinction within the market enabling the establishment of trademarks and market niches.

Although artisans are fairly content to change designs there are a number of artisan communities that seek market niches. At the present time it is not easy to access international markets and the majority of enterprise remains within the local market due to a lack of marketing strategy and economical support. Participation in international trading exhibitions has currently appeared to be an efficient approach. Also, due to the competitive domestic market and low value associated with paper cutting, many artists have teaching jobs in local schools or studios to maintain their basic living standard.

Generally speaking, the development of paper cutting art in China has progressed positively. Through political support by means of award programmes, representatives gain the support and backing to preserve and innovate paper cutting, which has in turn increased the impact of national brands based on cultural heritage. To deal with competitive market, creative concepts are undertaken according to different geographies, culture, style of creator and local resource. Marketing strategies are employed to modify the method of creation. The role of the theme museum is not only as an educational institution but also act as a marketplace. Examples discussed within this chapter have examined the scope of preservation and innovation of paper cutting and a theoretical framework of art activity will be developed in the subsequent chapter.

## **6 Analysis of findings and formation of theory**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the influential drivers that emerged from the interview data in order to answer the research questions. The literature review identified diversified styles within regions of China along with unique measures for innovation (chapters 4 and 5). Therefore influential factors should be regarded a considerable attribute in the renewal of a traditional art. However, from academic literature it was discovered there is a lack of in-depth research and analysis within this field. Some researchers proposed geography-oriented explanations, whereas others focused on addressing variables contained within certain regions [Yu, 2007, p.7; Yan and Hsieh, 2009, p.7; Rong, 2010, p.331; Wang, 2010, p.35]. However, it was revealed that the development of the art is not influenced by single pattern. There is evidence from previous studies that influential factors may include the personality of the artist, local habit, material and special cutting technique [He, 2004, p.18; Jian, 2009, p.21; Sun and Ji, 2010, pp.104-105]. This chapter seeks to gain a theoretical explanation of these multi-dimensional relationships in order to provide an extensive view the development.

The research commenced with analysis of archival data to identify questions and cases to develop a conceptual framework to clarify the hypothesis. Deeper explanations regarding influential drivers were sought by field observation and in-depth interviews. The field trips took place in the period of 2011-2013. Considering the volume of regional styles, the scope of field investigation in China spanned four provinces including Hebei (the north), Jiangsu and Hunan (the central) and Fujian (the south), referred to the coordinate classification method [He, 2004, p.18; Zhu, 2010, p.20] to capture holistic and precise viewpoints. Semi-structured interviews were arranged with a cultural minister, two shop owners and five national awarded artists and each signified specific perspective to provide empirical insights to the findings. In

this case, sampling criteria relied on validity and credibility of sources such as government documents and renowned status of individuals.

In an effort to explore in greater detailed explanation of the factors influencing paper cutting style, the discussion of influential drivers was classified into two categories, internal and external, according to the emergent data from analysis of archival and primary research. Section 6.2 addresses the internal drivers and three of differentiated factors are discussed in turn. Section 6.3 addresses the effects of external drivers and three correlated attributes are identified. Furthermore, in order to provide further clarification, each subsequent section contains transparent analysis including comparative and contrastive features from the cases and interpretation of the interview data with reference to the immediate context. When faced with factors that can not be addressed through interview data due to accessibility issues, examples are proposed by theoretical sampling.

## **6.2 The internal drivers of paper cutting art**

Through analysis of archival data and interpretation of interview transcript, influential drivers classified to the category of internal have emerged. The following discussion underpinned three influential drivers: environment, cultural activity and local custom. Subsections related to these drivers are listed respectively: the environment driver is consisted of weather, location and local resource; cultural activity is referred to theme competition, class, exhibition and other art performance; local custom is in consideration of ethnic group and festival. This section is involved with description, explanation and outcome.

When looking at the differences of the styles between the north and the south area, the interview data obtained from the artists in the south showed invaluable perspective. In this case the Zhangpu style was chosen for representing south style regarding the prestige and the convenience (see chapter 3). In order to gain the overall introduction of Zhangpu style (Fujian province, the south area), the interview with the cultural minister was conducted before

interviewed four local artists. The minister revealed the differentiation of the development of paper cutting between the north and the south and indicated the explanation. According to Zhang, the varied definition of paper cutting art appeared geographically initiated from ancient times in terms of prolonged history and has been acknowledged among the nation and resulted in different application. In the north area the art is regarded as a national art therefore cultural activity regarding to preservation are held regularly whereas in the south the art was employed into daily life such as applied to articles as an element. According to this differentiation, the explanation appears to involve with “weather” driver in addition to initial concept of “definition”. The key point of distinction here was that in order to maintain the art, the north focused on keeping traditional form whereas the south changed the material. In this place innovation was driven by the intention for “preservation”.

*Yu Chun: “What is your opinion of the variables of paper cutting styles in China?”*

*Zhang: “Paper cutting art seems to be regarded a form of fine art in the north, you can see more exhibitions are held here comparing to the south. Since the dry weather condition in the north the art is able to remain in paper production. While in the south, people see the art of paper is disposable due to the wet weather. Therefore in the south, artists tend to find substitute materials. Accordingly, the art is mainly applied to pragmatic use.”*

It was clear to see the style of paper cutting was divided into the north and the south in general. The minister described differentiations of the art in two areas respectively and conceptualised the connection between influential drivers. While the explanation started with “initial definition” of the art, the “environment” factor strengthened the concept and affected the styles as a result. The suggestion here was that in the south the need for durable design facilitated a great deal of transformation. Also, “pragmatic use” may refer to religious

decoration in terms of the worship of the god, was implemented as a traditional habit in the area.

In order to obtain insight of the development of the art in the northern part of China, an interview was conducted with a shop owner (also an artist) in Yu County, Hebei province (capital province, the north area). The province was selected in terms of renowned prestige for depicting traditional graphs [Sun and Ji and Li, 2008, p.72; Zhang and Zhang, 2009, p.16]. In terms of the two facets of background of the interviewee the comments contained two perspectives. From the shop owner's view of the explanation of local preservative style paralleled the minister's vision that the art is regarded as a form of fine art in the area. Also, the region seemed proud of this Chinese art and in order to hold up the pride and to promote this national cultural heritage, maintaining the traditional style was the implementation. Besides, environment driver was proposed as another attribute to determine the design.

*Yu Chun: "How do you describe the paper cutting style in this region?"*

*Chou: "In Yu County, artists devote to preserve the tradition of the art and aim to introduce Chinese culture to other country, therefore they are tend to illustrate traditional subjects like life scenery, ancient elements and legendary story. It is convenient to capture ideas from daily life. Inspiration is not easy to obtain outside the region."*

According to the shop owner's description that while the intention of exhibiting this ancient tradition in a complete version resulted from "preservation", the "inaccessibility" of the area enhanced the idea and affected design method. From artist's perspective it was convenient to articulate traditional patterns and derived ideas from surroundings rather than sought inspiration outside the region. From the experience of field trip to the region it was in the West North area of Hebei province where was no direct transportation to travel to. The place



was nearly a country village rather than a modern city full of arty references, therefore gathering inspiration locally was considered economical and convenient approach. However, referring to the shop owner that the region aimed to introduce this Chinese art to the world and implicated theme festivals were supported by local government in terms of the capital province, and export trade was the main marketing strategy.

Similarly, unique local resource seemed to be categorised into the group of environment driver. The interview with Zhangpu-based artist (the south style) exemplified Foshan style adopted local resources (metal material) and resulted in irreplaceable uniqueness. The artist's view of using immediate resources paralleled the shop owner's view and mentioned new technique (cooper chisel) was developed in accordance with new material. In this place in terms of the change of material, the form was transformed from a folk art to a handicraft.

*Yu Chun: "Any influential drivers you could think of have impact on regional style?"*

*Huang: "To artists, it is natural to use local resource for creation. In terms of the uniqueness, the result may be surprisingly satisfied. For instance, in Guangdong province artists apply cooper and gold foil to production. Initially the measure is adopted in terms of accessibility of the material and results in distinctive skill. I have heard that in Guangdong province although at present the metal material seems to extinguish from the region, artists seek the same resources continuously from other places in order to maintain the unique technique.'*

According to artist's view that in Guangdong province the idea of using local material initiated intuitively and suggested natural resource provided a convenience to innovation. Furthermore, in order to practice new material (especially metal), the new cutting skill was required as well as new tools. Since paper cutting art is considered a inherit skill and passed

down by old generation, it is questioned where and how to obtain new technique. In response to this it was reported that in this region the curving technique is developed vigorously resulting from the flourish development of curving industry [Yan, 2008, p.129]. Therefore artists were able to develop new skills from relevant professionals. The following section addressed other local art form influenced the style of paper cutting.

The interpretation of interview data suggested that the section of environment driver consists of three sectors: weather, location (accessibility) and local resource. When considering aforementioned points it implied different degrees of influences among influential drivers. First, while the cultural minister pointed that “weather” driver is the dominant influence to design in this group, “the definition of the art” was mentioned alongside the discussion. Also, the idea of differentiations in the north and the south areas proposed reinforce the importance of environment driver. In this sense, the dry weather in the north area contributes to the continuous use of paper material while in the south wet weather condition facilitates new material experiment. Although the initial definition towards the art is proposed as an influential driver to design that in terms of preservation purpose the north style remains in traditional form whereas the south style inclines to applied art in relation to pragmatic habit, the degree of influence of this influential driver seems to reach the level of design concept rather than the artistic action. Second, the case for “location” driver proposed by the shop owner from the north area highlighted that inaccessibility contributes to preservation in relation to a lack of stimulation. In this sense this influential driver appeared mostly in the north area due to difficult travelling route. By contract, “local resource” driver was, to some extent provided inspirations (material and idea) facilitated changes in content design and choice of material. Here, in terms of the distinct, aboriginal resources that may occur in any region, the influence is iconic and irrelevant to weather and location.

These findings provided clarification of the findings from the archival and empirical analysis, in the sense that the environment driver comprises more than single sector and each sector

represents different degree of influence. The case for weather driver suggested that weather condition determined the choice of material, that have been supported by the differentiations appear in the north and south styles. Whereas the influence caused by location driver was found mostly in the north area where artists placed emphasis on preservation in terms of inaccessibility. Unlike weather and location driver, the influence to styles is classified to the group of the north and the south, local resource driver demonstrated a distinct influence that attributed to singular style in regions. Furthermore, local resource driver shares the similarity with weather driver that influenced the choice of material but in a different degree. The former addressed more on combing concepts whereas the latter emphasized preservation.

Besides discussing the influence caused by environment driver, the shop owner based in Yu County (Hebei province, the north style) described paper cutting style of the region and artistic community driver was emerged. Referring to the interviewee that due to the popularity of Chinese opera performance in the area, the affection for characters has transferred to inspiration for paper cutting. As a result opera characters were depicted intensively along with unique developed colouring technique and resulted in recognizable feature in the field. In this sense other art activity influences the design of paper cutting.

*Yu Chun: "What is the iconic design in this region?"*

*Shop owner: "The region is famous for depicting Chinese opera characters.*

*Pointing colouring technique is the unique skill for the area. You can see a work is filled with more than ten colours. This is due to the vigorous development of Chinese opera performance. The public love characters."*

As mentioned previously that the north style concentrated on maintaining traditional form of art and in Yu County the idea of depicting Chinese opera figures paralleled the phenomena since the opera performance is also regarded a national art in China. While "preservation"

was the initial intention for depicting opera figures, “popularity” seemed to be the incentive. The suggestion here was that “public interest” determined the design method. Illustrating popular graphs enabled to strike the chore and improve impression. Also, from the artist’s perspective it was convenient to obtain inspiration from surroundings and local art appeared to be one of the reference. As to using opera characters as motif design, unique dying technique was invented accordingly in an effort to mimic the bright and radiant style of performing figures. In this place paper cutting art reflected style of other local art.

In addressing the influence caused by art activity, the activities held by government scheme appeared to play significant role. In an effort to stimulate the awareness of cultural preservation to the public, Chinese authorities related to the field conduct creative activities regularly. For instance, Chinese Folk Literature and Art Society established in 1950 in Beijing, dominates promoting and conducting creative programs such as setting up research institutions and theme museums in regions, hosting national exhibition and competitions, and publishing relevant books constantly. Therefore, being a member of art organisation seemed to be an efficient method to gain experiences of art activity. The following comments from a Zhangpu-based artist revealed the benefit of joining the art group.

*Yu Chun: “How do you obtain inspiration?”*

*Lu: “Besides gather ideas from traditional graphs and daily life, I join local and national paper cutting association and have constant contact with artists from other regions. We have regular meetings to share recent creation. Also, I receive annual books of winning works after the competitions. I gain ideas from other regions by referencing the publication.”*

It is clear to see from the artist’s description that art association provided chance of networking while the art is time consuming and artists usually do the art solitary. However,

through interaction and referencing other artists' works may suggest the possibility of similar design, combining concepts and imitation, and result in decreasing the advantage of the unique style of each region in addition to new design as a result.

In order to preserve and stimulate art development, relevant schemes were conducted by organisation such as regular activities (competition, meeting, workshop) and publications for providing opportunity for learning and sharing. Take paper cutting competition as an example, in terms of the unexpected encounter such as unfamiliar topic, regulation and environment, artists are inspired to produce new style and achieve better recognition. An awarded artist shared the experience of attending theme competition and revealed own working pattern.

*Yu Chun: "Is there any influential experience that affect your design?"*

*Ou Yan: "Attending an improvised paper cutting competition is an exciting experience! I gained confidence from this type of game! It is so nervous to do paper cutting in limited time while I usually do works alone, at my own pace and place. The latest competition I joined the theme was about promoting the concept of honest, which I have never think of this topic before.... After winning the competition I do copies of the work and exhibit my award certificates in the store. My friends suggested me to do so to promote my brand."*

According to the artist that "seeking challenge" was the initial intention for participating competition, and the reward afterwards were considered additional incentive. It was clear to see the habit of producing the art seemed to be formed in certain pattern and signaled a need for stimulation in order to ignite creativity. When attending a competition, artists were asked to deal with new topic, brainstorming within limited time, working in different environment and facing with other competitive. Also, candidates' works were examined and awarded by highly regarded units enabled building confidence and recognition. With such designed

courses this kind of art activity seemed to be a training programme. Furthermore, referring to the artist that in terms of the rare illustrated topic received from the competition the work were duplicated to record afterwards and implicated similar concept could potentially been developed and influenced the usual style.

Besides exemplifying national paper cutting competition as one of government scheme that influenced the style, exhibiting art works overseas could not only facilitated cultural exchange but also obtained different perspectives and inspiration. Aiming to introduce Chinese art to the world, art organisation conducted trips to other countries regularly. In addition to showcase works of art, regional representatives were invited to demonstrate the art during the exhibition. From the following text the artist revealed how participating art activity stimulated new ideas.

*Yu Chun: "Is there any influential experience that affect your design?"*

*Kao: "When attending a conference doing cultural interaction in 1999 in German, I exhibited works comprising massive red imagery. At that time I sensed people there have doubts about my works and in the end it turns out to be a cultural difference. In China, red symbols auspicious whereas in German, red refers to revolution and bleeding thus I try to do colourful paper cuttings afterwards."*

From the description it was clear to see artists were able to receive different perspective opinion in terms of cultural differences. The initial idea to exhibit the art overseas was based on "preservation" and achieved "innovation" unexpectedly as a result. In this case artists generated different cultural awareness and interpreted the knowledge with own design. The suggestion here was that deriving ideas from other country had potential to new invention. Also, gaining ideas from different cultures was relevant to external driver.

In discussing how style could be influenced through interaction, workshops conducted by artists in schools, studios and museums should not be neglected. In terms of the aim for the art had changed from pure creation to teaching material, styles seemed to require modification accordingly. An artist taught the art in local school described the stages of tutorial and shared the method of transforming traditional graphs.

*Yu Chun: "How do you teach paper cutting art to young generation?"*

*Lu: " I give lessons in local elementary and junior high school. Lecture starts with introduction, including origins, different styles, representatives of local area and followed by improvised demonstration. I give home works to students. In order to trigger students' interests, I provide them graphs of cartoon characters to begin with. After a period of basic training process, they are allowed to start developing original creation. Also, I am interested in making traditional graphs into cute imagery. I think teaching inspires me in aspect of creation."*

According to the artist that while teaching, new interpretation of the art was developed in order to communicate with new generation. Referring to the artist, in terms of the prolonged history paper cutting art had formed a stereotype, it was suggested a feasible method to infuse modern elements in order to rebuild the imagery. In this case funny characters replaced traditional symbols. The key point here was that new style was invented according to the background of audience. The initial aim for teaching was "preservation" and facilitated "innovation" as a result. Here the approach to innovation was combining concepts.

As above-mentioned, imitation was likely to happen through the process of finding inspiration such as referencing artist portfolio (e.g. webpage, book) and interactive activity (regular meeting, competition). In this sense imitation is likely to direct to two outcomes in terms of different attempts. First, new ideas are likely to be formulated with the intension of

innovation through combining concepts. The artists shared the method that is considered to address this issue.

*Yu Chun: "What is your design method?"*

*Ou Yan: "I am interested in infusing different cultural elements into my design. For instance, I combine styles of Chinese, Japanese and western painting and regenerate to new style. Also, I try to bring perspectives from western composition. It is rarely to see such dimension in the field."*

Second, imitation initiated by the convenience and popularity attributes to similar design is considered a negative outcome. In this sense the former is in relation to lack of creativity and the later is in the cause of market demand that influence the development of the art and the market price as a result. From the artist's perspective imitation was a threat to originality that influence design method and marketing strategy. To deal with this challenge, it seemed that applying intellectual property right for every single design was not a practical approach in terms of the volume of subjects. From the following extract text it suggested that the encounter of "imitation" drove artists to use different design method and resulted in variables. The artist revealed the concern of the threat and shared the solution for tackling the obstacle.

*Yu Chun: "What kind of obstacle you encounter that affect your design?"*

*Ou Yan: "It is frustrating to see works have been copied though it is common. There is no copyright for paper cutting art hence it is easy to copy. I divide my works into two groups, different levels. One is limited edition specialized more delicate and unusual topics, and the other address more common subjects. By doing this prices can be made in different levels. Besides, I do not sell my works online."*



*Lu: "To deal with imitation, my measure is to make my design difficult to copy and follow. I tend to experience different styles. I apply graphs on clock design that involves more than just cutting and I made good profit because it is rare to see. Also, I sell special, complicated works only in studio shop and promote common works on online shop."*

Referring to Ou Yan the problem of imitation has the potential to be solved by government policy though at present stage it was not yet been addressed. Therefore the description reflected that imitation was an inevitable development in the field and suggested each artist may have developed different strategy. It was clear to see the intention for avoiding imitation became a driver to new design and influenced the classification of works as well as marketing method. In this place Lu's idea of avoiding selling works online paralleled Ou Yan's strategy. Furthermore, imitation eliminated the uniqueness and affected market price indicated that uniqueness represented good price in the market. In addition, it should be noted that preservation is considered one of drivers to imitation. In this sense in order to pass down the skill works needed to be copied.

Through the interpretation of interview data the driver, artistic community, was emerged and three sectors have been brought up. First, the case for other art performance driver exemplified the performance of Chinese opera was derived to content design. In this sense the driver projected two messages: 1) different forms of local arts have mutual influences; 2) the popularity of the art influences the style. In other words, local art form is regarded as inspiration for creation. This theory is reaffirmed from the archival data that Chaozhou style depicts puppet shadow and Chinese opera figures; Yunan style is associated with embroidery (see chapter 2). Therefore, the influence of this driver only appears in regions that cultivate certain arts in national level. Second, the influence caused by government scheme is considered nationwide comparing to the first driver. In this sense stimulations are able to obtain through participating regular activities and result in distinct outcome. Third, the threat

from imitation driver came from interactive activities and market place suggests imitation is inevitable in this field and according methods facilitate changes in design method and marketing strategy. Here, the degree of influence is considered the highest in this group in relation to the desire of protecting intellectual right from individuals.

On the other hand, socio-cultural custom such as festival seemed to play a significant role to influence the design that was emerged in an interview with one of representatives of south style. From the archival data lantern festival in Quanzhou city (Fujian province) held by local government involved with competition and exhibition, is regarded a successful example of combining lantern design with paper cutting technique [Shu, 2005, p.11]. In terms of the incentive: winning works are entitled to showcase in gallery, street and other regions to gain the recognition and prestige, artists are encouraged to produce new design every year. In order to gain the insight of the development in the area, an investigation was took place in 2013 and an interview was conducted with an awarded representative in the field. The artists described the origin concept of combing traditional art forms.

*Yu Chun: "How does the concept of combing paper cutting and lantern design formulate in the first place?"*

*Huang: "My grandfather, Yao Bao Lee, a pioneer of combining paper cutting with lantern design in the field, used to be a constructor. Since books that relevant to architecture have been burned out during Culture evolution, the intention of illustrating architecture elements with paper cutting skill on lantern design was to preserve old design. In this studio you can see symbols on designs are all related to old buildings. Besides, in order to win the lantern competition, I choose a specific topic for design every year, such as a type of flower or animal."*

According to the description that the artist manipulated two professionals (architecture, paper cutting) with local art festival (lantern) and facilitated the invention. The idea of combining concepts was initiated from “preservation” resulting from previous government policy, and art activity held by local government in recent years renewed the tradition. The implication here was that artist regarded lantern festival as a traditional habit that could not be eliminated therefore employed the forbidden patterns (architecture elements) on lanterns. The suggestion was that government policy influenced the development of the art and local custom may be used as a means to preserve multiple forms of art.

Moreover, another influential driver that should be included in this section is ethnic group that was emerged from archival data. Cases for this issue have been discussed in previous chapters: Heilongjiang artist generates new style by integrating Herzer and Man group (see chapter 2); Ningxia style combines Hui group and Islamic culture (see chapter 4); Man group dominates the design of Liaoning style (see chapter 4); Yunnan style is influenced by Dai group (see chapter 4). In this sense the measure of combining concepts was used and resulted in distinct style.

The interpretation of findings suggested that the scope of socio-cultural custom includes three sectors: government scheme, festival and ethnic group. From the interview data the degree of influence of these three appear similarly that all of which occur in specific condition. The influence caused by government scheme seemed to show in limited time and to whom participant in the activity, however, the publications and teaching materials are likely to influence followers. In other words, this driver provided inspiration and reference that enabled the influence being consistent. Similar to government scheme, the festival driver is also conducted by authority but appeared only in regions that cultivated traditional programme. Therefore the influence of this driver is rather minor. In discussing the degree of influence, ethnic group driver only happened in regions habitant with emigrants. From the

archival data in terms of the volume of ethnic group, the influence of this driver exceeded the driver of festival.

In addition, the interview data suggested outcomes of this section comprising preservation, imitation and innovation, and the measure was combining concepts. However, the purposes for adopting the method appear differently between these three sectors. According to cases for festival and ethnic group driver the measure was used in attempt to preserve traditional custom with the skill of paper cutting art. Whereas cases for government scheme exemplified the emphasis was placed more on innovation.

### **6.3 The external driver of paper cutting art**

In terms of the competitive atmosphere in the market, market forces such as customer preferences emerged from the empirical data, was labeled to type of external driver. According to the interviews with one shop owner in the north and four awarded representatives based in the south area, artists in conventional and modern society appeared to encounter different challenges. It became apparent that the former faced with obstacles such as maintaining originality and innovation, while the latter tend to struggle with improving the value of art status as well as promoting product. In addressing this issue four cases were identified that seemingly offered greater potential for explanation. The following section discussed how practitioners sought success in market appeal and rebranding with the aid of new ideas in extremely demanding redevelopment environment.

Marketing is not only regarded to satisfy the need of customers but also involves with challenges associated to other types of relationships. The value is increased in accordance with additional design and the popularity determines the majority of style. In this place the intention to improve market appeal and response to different markets motivates innovation. In order to obtain the knowledge of how the art has been transformed and how artists position themselves in relation to the competition, interviews with shop owners and regional

representatives spanned the north and the south area were conducted during the study. The following extract of text from a shop owner in Yu County (Hebei province, the north part of China) revealed the major marketing strategy used in local area and highlighted packaging design was considered a remarkable innovation.

*Yu Chun: “ What is the representative feature in this region?”*

*Chou: “The region is renowned for preserving traditional patterns. We want to introduce this traditional art to overseas. In addition to maintain the tradition, efforts are put on packaging design. The measure aims to improve the value of the art, in aspects of status and price. In China the status of paper cutting art seems to be underestimated from early century comparing to other art form such as Traditional Chinese painting. Therefore you can see works are packaged with fine materials such as silk and advanced paper. There are paper cuttings pasted on cardboard binding into books, calendars, postcards, and rolls of paintings”.*

From the comments it seemed that the status of the art was in accordance with the market price. In terms of the prolonged invaluable expression of paper cutting, which might result from easily accessed tools and material and the belonged area, a folk art, an art form that can be practiced by everyone, it was struggled to establish a market niche. The suggestion here was that the intention for doing packaging design was to improve the status of the art. And the approach of packaging was chosen in relation to valuable consideration (improve the status), new imagery (market appeal) and protection (preservation).

Unlike the north style addressed more on preserving traditional style, artists in the south part of China seemed to experiment with new attempts. The following extract texts from three artists based in Fujian province revealed methods to make market appeal, and indicated the focus in the south area inclined to transformation of the art.

*Yu Chun: “What is your innovative design?”*

*Lu: “I am interested in renewing traditional patterns. I transform old symbols into cute imagery to decrease the mystery of traditional culture. I hope young people will think this traditional art interesting. In addition, making Chinese words like graphs is another interesting attempt. I also combine paper cutting imagery with daily articles like clock and this product is popular for customers because it is useful.”*

It was clear to see the purpose for transformation was to make market appeal. In order to bridge the connection between traditional art and modern life, paper cutting was reinterpreted into a new definition and style. While the art was transformed to applied art the cultural significance of traditional symbols appeared insignificant. The suggestion here was that in order to attract young buyers the art seemed to be designed approachable and joyful and might be considered a method of preservation.

*Yu Chun: “What is your innovative design?”*

*Kao: “I derive ideas from daily incidents for content design in addition to Chinese traditional patterns. For example, touching stories from daily news. I think it is different from other artists.”*

According to Kao, the method of deriving ideas from daily incidents paralleled Lu’s approach, was in attempt to change the old imagery to fit in modern society. The motif design has changed from auspicious graphs to positive social incident and suggested that the design was determined by audience’s interest. The implication here was the potential customer might be just in favour of the story rather than found of the art in the first place and resulted in expanding the market. Furthermore, in terms of the design involved with current popular

issues, the form has transformed from a folk art to modern art that reflect current culture and society.

*Yu Chun: “What is your innovative design?”*

*Ou Yan: “I infuse different art elements into my works, such as Traditional Chinese painting, Japanese painting, western painting, though those works may not be popular in the dominant market. What I do is not totally for the market, and that makes my work different from others. I try to bring perspectives from western composition. I am interested in creating different layers. Besides, I most admire thin line style from Yueching style. I combine this style with our bold line style. I want to set up my own style through various experiments and aim to exhibit variety of styles.”*

From the artist's comment it implied that the intention for innovation was more on 'personal training' rather than 'stimulate the sale'. And the 'not to follow the mainstream' strategy made the uniqueness. Also, the method of deriving ideas from diverse areas suggested a possibility of attracting different background of customers. For instance people who collect works of Japanese paintings might be interested to see the art in a paper cutting version. Furthermore, the approach of combining Chinese art with western culture signaled not only a renewed imagery but also a foreign market strategy.

Through the above-discussion it was apparent in artists' description that different target market influenced the style of paper cutting. According to interviewees, design might be determined by preservation, personal preference, popularity and the interest of customer. Also, potential market could be explored unexpectedly by design method such as experimenting different kinds of attempts, infusing elements from different form of art, deriving ideas from other culture (outside China). Furthermore, in terms of different perspectives toward the art,

measures adopted in the north and south area appeared differently. It seemed that in the northern part of China, the focus was more on preservation and introducing Chinese art therefore the measure (packaging) was designed to promote the art in a traditional way. While in the south the design inclined to follow popularity. Also, in terms of the application of the art was used mainly on applied art, dynamic style was expected to see more often in the area comparing to the north.

#### **6.4 The outputs of paper cutting art**

The previous section discussed the interpretation of the interview data and explored influential drivers surrounding each of the cases. The discussion of these case was structured around internal and external drivers alongside expressing purposes for creative changes in relation to individual encounter that led to three major outcomes: preservation, innovation and imitation. This section expands on the analysis by focusing on each output aiming to use the interpretation of interview data to elaborate formative explanations for variables in design observed in the findings from the analysis of archival and empirical data.

##### **6.4.1 Preservation**

According to the interview data, preservation resulted from two attempts: 1) to pass down the traditional art (heritage) 2) the lack of new inspiration due to inaccessibility. Accordingly, in terms of the complexity of composition of paper cutting art, changes appeared to involve in content design, material and style. The following section discusses cases that exemplify each issue aiming to analysis the outcome elaborately.

In explaining the emphasis on content design, remaining traditional patterns appeared to be the major concern. From the archival data styles based around the Yellow River (the north area, considered to signal north style) articulate traditional symbols substantially (see chapter 4.2). The shop owner in Yu County (Hebei province, the north style) once suggested that this capital city focused on promoting paper cutting art as one of Chinese tradition art to overseas



and implied the measure of depicting traditional graphs the efficient approach: 'In Yu County, artists devote to preserve the tradition of the art and aim to introduce Chinese culture to other country, therefore they are tend to illustrate traditional subjects'. In this sense the purpose for preservation was to promote Chinese art in addition to remain national heritage.

Furthermore, from the interview and archival data it was discovered that traditional graphs are classified to auspicious symbols, opera figures, natural scenery and life scenery. The group of auspicious symbols comprised twelve zodiac animals, botany, containers, legendary characters and Chinese words (see chapter 2), regarded the prominent feature in the section of traditional graphs regarding to the prolonged history that embodied blessing and festive significance. Additionally, Chinese opera figures were depicted in relation to the popularity of local art in certain regions and resulted in preserving two traditional arts. The representative cases for this issue would be Yu County style (the north area) that specialized in illustrating opera figures in radiant colours and Chouzhou style (the south area) depicted opera figures in singular colour to mimic leather-silhouette show (chapter 4). The comments from the shop owner in Yu County provided the explanation: 'The region is famous for depicting Chinese opera characters. This is due to the vigorous development of Chinese opera performance. The public love characters.' In addition, it was discovered that life scenery was depicted majorly in conventional society with difficult travelling route. Referring to the interview data that inaccessibility attributed to preservation in the cause of the lack of stimulation and convenience. The artist in Yu County provided the explanation: 'It is convenient to capture ideas from daily life. Inspiration is not easy to obtain outside the region.' In this sense preservation was the consequence rather than the purpose. Another case for this issue would be Shaanxi style, observed from archival data that preserves a great deal of traditional symbols (see chapter 4.6.11)

Unlike the north style articulated traditional graphs to achieve preservation, the south style inclined to use different measure. The most representative case would be combing lantern

design with paper cutting skill for local lantern festival (Quanzhou city, Fujian province). The revealing comment from the artists was that ‘The intention of illustrating architecture elements with paper cutting skill on lantern design was to preserve old design.’ This comment revealed that combining concepts was adopted to preserve local custom in accordance with paper cutting technique. This strategy was supported by a Zangpu-based (Fujian province) artist, ‘In order to trigger students’ interests, I provide them graphs of cartoon characters to begin with.’ This comment showed combining concepts was in attempt to stimulate new generation’s interests to learn this ancient art. In this sense the intention to preservation in the south area appeared to involve with innovation and will be further discussed in chapter 6.4.2.

In discussing preservation in the aspect of material, using paper material continuously was the cause. The case for weather driver revealed that dry weather condition in the north area enabled artist practicing paper material whereas the south style developed replacement to deal with the wet weather, as the cultural minister explained: ‘you can see more exhibitions are held in the north comparing to the south. Since the dry weather condition in the north the art is able to remain in paper production.’ It is apparent in the minister’s description that environment driver reinforced the choice of material in addition to artists’ preference. In this sense preservation for paper material appeared better achieved in the north than the south area.

Also, the choice of material affected the style. The cultural minister once pointed that the most traditional style of paper cutting, window flower (paste paper works on the window), appeared majorly in the north than the south in terms of dry weather that paper work could survive longer. The finding was paralleled the archival data that window flower is the main feature of the art in Shaanxi province (chapter 2). In this sense preservation for traditional style was better achieved in the north area in terms of environmental force.

#### **6.4.2 Imitation**

In terms of complex composition of paper cutting art, the definition of imitation refers to similar design in the style of outline, motif, and layout. The interpretation of interview data exposed imitation occurred in relation to three different intentions: preservation, innovation and convenience. Accordingly, each attempt achieved different degree of imitation. The discussion of this section was structured around these three purposes and exemplified cases for explanations.

From the analysis of interview and archival data it was discovered that the north style emphasized on preservation and resulted in specialized in addressing traditional style (patterns, material, flat form). As the artist revealed: 'In Yu County, artists devote to preserve the tradition of the art and aim to introduce Chinese culture to other country, therefore they are tend to illustrate traditional subjects like life scenery, ancient elements and legendary story.' From the description it became apparent that imitation was interpreted as a means of passing down paper cutting art as regarded a national heritage. Accordingly traditional symbols were popularly articulated in order to strengthen the impression of the style of the region to build up the brand. Furthermore, the outcome of this purpose seemed to remaining the traditional graphs solely, however, it should be noted that Yu County style also achieve new style through mimicking local popular opera figures. In order to imitate various vibrant colours of characters, distinctive colouring technique was invented accordingly (see figure 4.2). In this sense the imagery of Chinese opera figures were preserved in accordance with paper cutting art and was regarded a representative feature of the region.

Unlike the purpose for preservation appeared regardless to creative perspective, the intention for innovation by contrast resulted in new designs. In explaining innovation as a purpose to imitation, the interview data revealed that 'artistic community' provided opportunity of sharing and learning and imitation was likely to appear during the process of creating new styles, as the artists explained: 'I receive annual books of winning works

after paper cutting competitions. I gain ideas from other regions by referencing the publication.’ From the comment it suggested a design procedure that searching inspiration from publication followed by combining concepts to generate new design, as the artist revealed: ‘I most admire thin line style from Yueching style. I combine this style with our bold line style.’ In this sense innovation appeared to be an evolution of an old style. Besides discussing the aspect of innovative style, imitation also occurred in motif design discovered from the interview data. The most revealing case would be the Zhangpu-based artist articulated the western painting, ‘The last super’, into a paper cutting version (see Figure 4.13). In this sense imitation happened in the aspects of motif and layout but in the style of paper cutting therefore the outcome appeared creative and innovative. Moreover, the idea of combining Chinese and Western art also considered a distinctive strategy to expand the market.

In relation to the purpose for the convenience, the interview data revealed that there were two types of background: 1) the lack of inspiration in terms of insufficient resources; 2) competition, as reflected in the market place. According to the artist (Yu County, Hebei province, the north style) that inaccessibility affected design method and resulted in similar design in addition to preservation, ‘Inspiration is not easy to obtain outside the region.’ From the description it seemed that imitation was likely to occur within a certain range. The case supports for this interpretation was found in archival data, that Guangling style (Shanxi province, next to Hebei province) specializes in depicting Chinese opera figures in vibrant colours, is regarded influenced by Yu County style (see chapter 4.6.9).

In the cases where competitions attributed to imitation were presented in market place, as the artist once mentioned: ‘It is frustrating to see works have been copied though it is common. There is no copyright for paper cutting art hence it is easy to copy.’ From the description it was clear to see imitation was inevitable in the field in terms of accessible material and tool, and with no help from government, that attributed to competitive market. In this sense it was

artist's duty to deal with and resulted in varied solution, as artists' revealed: 'I divide my works into two groups, different levels. One is limited edition specialized more delicate and unusual topics, and the other address more common subjects.' 'To deal with imitation, my measure is to make my design difficult to copy and follow.' In this sense the threat from imitation facilitated innovation. Furthermore, marketing strategy was affected in accordance with design, as the artists explained: 'I sell special, complicated works only in studio shop and promote common works on online shop.' In this sense decreasing the possibility of exposing works to public as convenient resources to copy was the measure to the problem.

#### **6.4.3 Innovation**

The interpretations of interview data suggested that the attempt to innovation motivated paper cutting art to evolve through times. In explaining the emphasis on innovation, four aspects were emerged: content design, material and style. The definition of innovative content design was involved with deriving ideas from dimensional areas. Material aspect majorly related to using durable substance instead of fragile paper. New style was in the cause of transformation in designs of shape and form. Here, a key point was that combining concepts, appeared largely as an efficient design method to innovation. This section focuses on analyzing cases for each issue by using interview data to generate formative explanations.

In relation to innovation to the extent of content design, the study of the interview data exposed that three measures were adopted majorly: deriving ideas from different cultural elements, depicting modern imagery and iconography (traditional symbol). From the artist's point of view, obtaining inspiration from different areas seemed to be an efficient method, as the artist mentioned: 'I infuse different art elements into my works, such as Traditional Chinese painting, Japanese painting, western painting. I want to set up my own style through various experiments and aim to exhibit variety of styles (as illustrated in Figure 4.13).' The comment suggested the potential of the development of the art and combining concepts enabled to build up new style. Besides searching inspirations from aesthetic perspectives, some artists

articulate stories from surroundings to attract audience attention. 'I derive ideas from daily incidents for content design in addition to Chinese traditional patterns. For example, touching stories from daily news. I think it is different from other artists.' From the artist's description it seemed that depicting daily incident as motif for design made the art accessible. In other words, in terms of prolonged history of paper cutting art, this approach decreased the distance to the audience.

Similarly, eliminating the distant impression of traditional patterns from design appeared to be an apparent approach to innovate, as the artists explained: 'I transform old symbols into cute graphs to decrease the mystery of traditional culture. I hope young people will think this traditional art interesting (as shown in Figure 4.32).' In this sense the approach remained the traditional significance alongside creative imagery and the purpose for innovation is relevant to preservation.

In discussing innovation in aspect of material, the definition referred to using substance besides paper. In this sense, in order to tackle fragility of paper material, sought for durable replacement appeared to be an innovative approach. From the interview data it was discovered that while new material was easy to obtain, the innovation would occur naturally and representatively. The most appropriate case for this issue would be Guangdong style that manipulated metal material to creation, as the artist revealed: 'In Guangdong province artists apply copper and gold foil to production. Initially the measure is adopted in terms of accessibility of the material and results in distinctive skill.' From the artist's description it suggested that distinctive local resources facilitated innovation. Also, in this case distinctive cutting technique was invented in accordance with the new material experiment. Here, the innovative outcome comprised two aspects: material and cutting technique (skill and tool). When discussing innovative technique, it should be noted that western methods such as collage and paper sculptural were adopted to create new version, observed in the archival analysis (see Figure 4.8).

Besides exemplifying metal material as one of innovative attempt, different types of paper were experimented by artists that observed from interview data. In the case of combining lantern design with paper cutting technique, glossy paper was adopted to create radiant reflection (as shown in Figure 4.16). Disposable paper such as advertisement leaflet was used in relation to green design (as shown in Figure 4.18). In addition, waterproof fabric like velvet was discovered in the south market place (see Figure 4.11).

When looking at innovation in the aspect of style, the interview data projected two objectives: the first was aimed at added value, which was to create additional design such as packaging. The second was aimed at transformation of form from two dimensions to three dimensions. The most revealing examples of packaging design discovered majorly in the north area including a form of book, a calendar and a roll of painting (see Figure 4.9, Figure 4.10). In this sense paper cutting works became pages pasted on solid material (card board, silk) and the intention was in relation to preservation, to remaining using paper material and protecting paper from damage. The artist provided explanation: 'to maintain the tradition, efforts are put on packaging design. The measure aims to improve the value of the art, in aspects of status and price.'

While the north style focused on maintaining traditional form, artists in the south area inclined to transform flat style to dimensional version. An example of this would be the case of Quanzhou style (Fujian province, in the south area) that combining lantern design with paper cutting imagery and skills. In this sense pieces of paper cuttings became components for a lantern (see Figure 4.16). Here, initial intention was to preserve local custom and resulted in distinctive new design. The comment from the artist provided explanation: 'in order to win the lantern competition, I choose a specific topic for design every year, such as a type of flower or animal.'

In relation to the change of traditional form, the interview data revealed that auspicious patterns (e.g. botany) were applied to product design such as clock as graphic elements (see Figure 4.14). The intention here was to make the art accessible and practical in daily life. The artist's comment explained: 'I also combine paper cutting imagery with daily articles like clock and this product is popular for customers because it is useful.' From the description it became apparent that the incentive of innovation was to make market appeal in addition to experimenting new style.

This chapter provided clarification of the findings from the interview and archival analysis, in the sense that the outcomes are consisted of dimensional messages in relation to each distinctive condition. Three types of outcomes have been brought up to discussion. First, preservation in this place referred to remaining the traditional style in aspects of form, content design and material. Cases illustrated combing concepts as the main approach and inaccessibility contributed to remaining traditional heritage, and implied the possibility of imitation. Second, the section of 'imitation' debated the cause lead to positive results in addition to addressing relevant attributes. Third, the section of innovation discussed variables in content design, material and style respectively. Cases represented the north and the south styles showed apparent differences that would be appeal to practitioners. Through the elaborated analysis it was discovered three outcomes appeared to connect to influential drivers: 'preservation' was considered one of aim to 'socio-cultural custom'; 'imitation' was likely to happen in 'artistic community'; 'innovation' was the measure to pilot 'market forces'. In this sense the finding drew a complete explanation to the research questions.

## **6.5 Overview of findings and the formation of a theoretical explanation**

The interpretations of the interview transcripts and the analysis of the explored influential drivers have been discussed in previous section. To achieve dimensional discussion, influential drivers were structured into internal and external. This chapter expands on the analysis by focusing on the connections between drivers, from each of the background,



influence and outcome. Also, this section aims to employ the interpretations of interview data to generate constructive explanations for influential drivers discovered in the findings from the analysis of archival data.

The interpretations of interview data exhibit diversified explanations for variables of paper cutting style in China. Two categories are made to analyze explicitly which are internal and external. The internal type is regarded a domestic influence, where the impact is caused from intrinsic attributes, consists of environment, socio-cultural custom and artistic community. By contrast the type of external driver, market force, refers to an outer influence, where the effect is made by market demand and customer preference.

In describing two types of influential drivers, the study of the interview data identified elaborated factors from each subset. First, in the section of internal, the group of ‘environment’ comprised three independent drivers: weather, accessibility and local resources. Each driver related to changes of material selection, design method and content design. In this case the need for durable design contributed to innovation and different application; the lack of inspiration led to preservation; the unique local resource resulted in uniqueness. A key point here was that style of paper cutting was influenced by geography as well as its local unique supplements. Second, the section of ‘socio-cultural custom’ brought up two factors, ethnic group and festival, indicated a blend of different cultures contributed to variables in styles and traditional custom (activity) motivated the development of the art. Third, the section of ‘artistic community’ consisted of organized schemes (e.g. competition, exhibition) and other local art forms (e.g. embroidery, opera performance), suggested the implementation of interactive programme facilitated ideas exchange and resulted in branding, combining concepts, preservation and imitation. The method of deriving ideas from other local art contributed to uniqueness as well as reflected local art activity.

On the other hand, in the section of external driver, the key issue was addressed: ‘marketing forces’, exposed challenges encountered followed by according solutions. In order to response to different markets, the according designs lead to different styles in accordance with innovation and branding. In this sense methods to innovation appeared a great difference between the north and the south in terms of different perspectives (traditional concept, application) towards the art. In this sense, variables became apparent in aspects of application, content design, shape design, inspiration and the choice of material. These differentiations were informed by listing drivers, whereby consideration was given to both internal and external. In this place it was evident that diverse changes were not determined by geography solely but dimensional sectors. This overview of typology of influential drivers can be seen in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 (supplemented with a map), and is further discussed in the following section.

Table 6.1 Typology of influential drivers

INTERNAL DRIVERS	INFLUENCES	OUTCOME
Environment		
a)weather	The choice of material	Preservation Innovation Different application
b)location(accessibility)	Limited/insufficient resources Lack of new inspiration	Preservation
c)local resource/industry (e.g. special plants/animals/ metal)	Content design The choice of material	Innovation
Socio-cultural custom		
b)festival	Encouragement	Preservation Innovation
a)ethnic group	Inspiration Ideas exchange	Innovation (Combining concepts)
Artistic community		
a)government scheme (competition/class/meeting/ exhibition)	Inspiration Ideas exchange	Innovation (Combining concepts) Preservation Imitation Branding
a)other art performance (e.g. opera/embroidery)	Content design	Innovation Combining concepts
b)threat of imitation	Content design	Innovation
EXTERNAL DRIVER	INFLUENCES	OUTCOME
Marketing forces (customer preference)	Content design	Innovation Imitation Market appeal Branding

Table 6.2 Analysis of differentiations between the north and the south area

DIFFERENTIATIONS BETWEEN AREAS		
Genres	North	South
Application	Fine art (ext. religious use: Ningxia)	Applied art
Content design	Traditional patterns	Combining concepts
Feature innovation	Package design	Content design
Inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate environment</li> <li>• Local art activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate environment</li> <li>• Local and international art activity</li> </ul>
Material	Paper mainly (ext. fish skin: Heilongjiang tree bark/animal skin: Inner Mongolia)	New experiments (e.g. Copper/gold foil: Guangdong)
Marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally</li> <li>• National and international trade fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally</li> <li>• National and international trade fair</li> <li>• Online shop</li> </ul>



### **6.5.1 Classification purpose**

When looking at diversified influential drivers, the interview data revealed dimensional perspectives and undiscovered messages that conceptualized the link between drivers. The method of classifying types into internal and external was in attempt to analyze data explicitly. The section of internal drivers comprised ‘environment’, ‘socio-cultural custom’ and ‘artistic community’ and each of them was elaborated to sub drivers that show complexity and cohesion. Three relevant drivers were identified in the section of ‘environment’: weather, location and local resources, which in the overall expression the sector was associated to ‘geography’ solely. The ‘socio-cultural custom’ section highlighted the importance of ethnic group and festival expanded a broader message of the cultural impact. The ‘artistic community’ section concluded organized schemes and other local arts provided a new consideration to general idea of this sector, generally served as ‘fair for recreation’. As to the aspect of external section, marketing forces, represented challenges that occur in modern society and has yet been addressed. The method of classifying drivers into two types and elaborated to sub-sectors delivered in-depth understanding of various influences and appeared to be a holistic and systematic analysis.

The analysis of influential drivers was designed into three categories: the name of influential driver, influence and outcome to emphasize the relations and consequences. The structure was according to questions related to interview that each driver was sought by its background and projected impact subsequently. The arrangement revealed specific development and can be seen as a reference of innovative approach also held appeal to relevant practitioners.

### **6.5.2 Internal drivers**

This interpretation relates to the archival analysis, and in this area most of definition are geography-oriented. However through the interpretation of the data for internal drivers it was discovered the section could be elaborated to ‘socio-cultural custom’ and ‘artistic community’ in addition to ‘environment’. This exploration suggested a theoretical gap and thus worthy of

further analysis. The following section discusses ‘environment’ driver was consisted of weather, location and unique local resources.

The explanation for the “weather” sector was based on the view from the cultural minister suggested there was a connection between geography, weather and application. According to the comment the style of paper cutting art was divided into two types: the north and the south, based on general classification and traditional knowledge. From the minister’s comment, designs in the south inclined to “pragmatic use” that was influenced by ancient habit, the worship of the god, which explain the art was used to employ as an applied art (decorate religious articles). And due to dry weather in the north area, the art was eligible to maintain in paper production and attributed to preservation, whereas in the south area artists sought substitute material under wet weather condition and resulted in innovation. The interpretation here was that in terms of different weather and demand, the need for durable design in the south facilitated diversified innovation comparing to the north.

In addition to weather driver, the interview data suggests that accessibility is considered to influence design method. An example of this would be the view from a shop owner based in Yu County (Hebei province, the north area) suggested that it was convenient to articulate traditional patterns and derived ideas from surroundings rather than sought inspiration outside the region. The comments revealed a design strategy and suggested the condition of insufficient resources limited inspiration. The finding further supports archival data that styles regarded the most traditional pattern preserved are gathered in the north area along with difficult travel route.

The explanation for local resource driver would be the interpretation from an interview with a Zhangpu-based artist that the intention for using local material was intuitively and convenient. According to the artists an example for the issue was Foshan style, which was regarded a renowned example for employing metal material to design. It seemed that new technique was

invented in accordance with new material and resulted in a unique form of art. Also, in terms of the change of material, the form of art was transformed from a folk art to a craft. In addition, the scope of influence seemed to include content design. An example for this was observed from archival data that graphs like elephant and peacock are depicted exclusive in Yunan style.

Findings of this section provided additional analysis of the findings from the archival data, in the sense the ‘environmental’ driver elaborated to weather, location and local resource. The weather driver raises the different definition towards the art in the north and the south areas further supports variables in end use; the location driver highlights accessibility has a tendency to influence design method; the unique local resource provides inspiration to creation and the results appeared appeal to audience. From the analysis it became apparent that searching ideas from surroundings seemed to be a common and convenient approach and this interpretation was further reaffirmed by the next driver, ‘socio-cultural custom’, discussed in the following section.

The interpretation of the data for ‘socio-cultural custom’ section focused on how cultural habit influenced the style of paper cutting. The findings revealed “festival” driver played a crucial role in addition to “ethnic group” observed from archival data. In this research the view from artists of ethnic group was unable to obtain due to difficult travelling route. However, several examples have been observed in archival data. The finding synthesizes representative examples and contextualizes the relations between the influence and outcome.

Furthermore, from archival data it was apparent to see the importance of “ethnic group” driver to the influence for paper cutting style. Examples for the issue would be Ningxia and Heilongjiang style. The former composed by Hui group and Islamic culture shows unique cultural habit through depicting distinct objects (e.g. Koran, temple), whereas the later adopts “fish skin” as material replacement that is regarded a signature of Hezhen group. The

intention seemed to relate to experiment immediate resources as a convenient approach and resulted in manifesting unique cultural statement in accordance with design. The interpretation here was that the blend of two cultures (local and emigrates) provides inspiration to artists and resulted in combining concepts.

The interpretation of “festival” driver demonstrated that traditional custom, alongside representing local history and branding, sought to preserve tradition through regular organized activity. An example of this would be lantern festival in Quanzhou province that local government emphasized the importance of the festival by conducting competition and exhibition each year, aimed to facilitate the development of traditional art. In this sense artists were motivated to do design constantly, and the incentive of this would be recognition offered by government benefited to branding. As it to the influence to style of paper cutting, it was discovered the technique was teamed up with lantern design. According to the artists the intension for combing concepts was in relation to preserve architecture pattern that was considered forbidden during the period of Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In this sense the artist combined three forms of art and the form of paper cutting was transformed from flat to three-dimensional determined by the theme of festival. The analysis of this case that had undergone merging traditional art and custom indicated that continuous activity initiated by preservation stimulated the development and influence the style as a result.

These interpretations provided an additional explanation of variables caused by ‘socio-cultural custom’ from the archival data. The archival data suggested ethnic group contributed to the method of combing concepts highlighted by unique emigrants’ cultures, whereas findings from interview data discovered regular activity in relation to preservation held by local authority became incentive to innovation. The analysis of this driver also provided approaches to renew a traditional art and suggested that government policy played crucial role to pilot the development.



On the other hand, the ‘artistic community’ driver emerged in terms of interactive activity provided opportunity for learning that influenced style. The analysis of data revealed the scope of diversified types of art activities that contributed to various impacts. Also, the definition of art activity explored through findings challenged the typical impression that would relate to short period of fun fair majorly. In this place findings were classified into two types: 1) organized art scheme; 2) other local art form. The exploration is discussed in the following paragraph.

The interpretation of interview data of ‘artistic community’ driver suggested several types of organized art schemes that contributed to variables of design. One of representative example for the issue would be paper cutting competition, suggested by the artist, whose experiences of participating theme competition indicated this type of activity was similar to a training course that stimulate creativity. From the competition holder’s perspective the intention was in relation to preservation, whereas the participant sought to challenge in accordance with new design. Also, recognition and award after competition were beneficial to branding. The explanation for listing teaching class driver, was according to the artist whose lecturing method involved with transforming traditional graphs to carton style and resulted in innovation. The interpretation for regular meeting was based on the artist’s view that attending such activity as a member of art organization enabled obtaining inspiration. However, it suggested possibility of conducting similar design in addition to combining concepts. In this sense imitation seemed to be an inevitable development of the field. The interpretation of this issue demonstrated that artists in modern society faced with different challenges comparing to conventional one, that have to be cautious of exposing works to public in order to remain the distinctive appeal. In this sense according to artists the threat of imitation motivated new design as well as changed marketing method that avoiding selling works online was considered an acknowledged solution. Accordingly, the message suggested that imitation decreased market appeal and distinctive design is believed valuable in the market place.

In the discussion of exhibition driver the artist shared the experience that while exhibiting work abroad comments received from different cultural perspective influenced the design. This example supplemented to conventional method that inspiration could be obtained outside China. This interpretation was reaffirmed by the shop owner that in terms of limited resources, attending exhibition and trade fair was regarded a method to obtain inspiration.

In relation to the influence made by ‘other local arts’, the interview data addressed that Chinese opera performance was used as one of inspiration in Yu County (Hebei province). The style was renowned by depicting opera characters in accordance with distinctive colouring technique to mimic vibrant colour combination. Here, the intention was in relation to inaccessibility and deriving ideas from surroundings seemed to be a convenient approach. Also, referencing popular objects was in consideration of gaining market appeal. In this sense the style was conducted by two traditional arts that contributed to preservation as well as build up brand in terms of distinctive combination. A key point here was that paper cutting art was influenced by other art form as well as reflected local art activity. The discovery of the relation between local art and paper cutting further supports to another example observed from the archival data that Yunan style is influenced by embroidery industry.

The analysis provided several types of government scheme and each was exemplified with representative case delivered more explicit explanation that supplemented the findings from the archival data. The archival data focused on addressing the superficial association and result (signature of the style) rather than searching the in depth reason. For instance, the style of Yu County renowned for depicting opera figures was due to the popularity of the performance in local area and the comments for this were mainly directed to appeal audience. However, it became apparent that the inaccessibility of the area also contributed to the result and the method was considered a convenient way to innovation.

### **6.5.3 External driver**

The section of external driver explored from interview data provided a more through explanation for differentiation of regional styles in addition to internal driver. The interpretation of interview data exposed “marketing forces”, raised in relation to change of lifestyle in modern society, therefore the art has transformed from leisure recreation to commercial product. In discussions artists shared innovative approaches to capture audience attention to seek market niche. The interpretation is discussed in the following section.

The interview data informed that different marketing forces contributed to different style. In this section examples proposed exemplified innovative approaches such as modernizing traditional symbol to attract young generation, depicting social incident to capture attention of public, and combining concepts from diverse areas to appeal different background of audience. In this sense “target audience” seemed to determine the style. This interpretation also supported findings from the section of environment driver that innovative measures appeared differently in the north and the south area. While the north style focused on packaging design in relation to introduce Chinese art to overseas, the south style tended to seek material replacement to apply the art to daily use to satisfy customer preference.

### **6.5.4 Outcomes**

This finding provided a holistic analysis in the sense that the results are comprised dimensional perspectives. In order to elaborate explanation, three aspects were brought up in the discussion, preservation, imitation and innovation, and each issue was exemplified with representative cases in relation to specified condition.

Cases for ‘preservation’ suggested two attempts. First, the aim of passing down traditional paper cutting art contributed to remaining original form to the extent of material and style. Second, location driver influenced design method, had a tendency to determine the end use and imitation. In this sense variables of design between the north and the south style have

been identified and suggested valuable methods to relevant practitioners. In the cases where methods to preservation were adopted, combining concepts was discovered the common measure. For instance, Yu County style (the north style) depicted local popular art performance, opera figures, whereas Quanzhou style applied paper cutting to lantern design for lantern festival. The finding suggested that the north style emphasized on introducing this traditional art form while the south style focused on sustaining the end use. This differentiation also implied traditional symbols were better preserved in the north area, and by contrast the south style represented dynamic transformation of the art.

In relation to imitation, the discussion elaborated the issue to three attempts: preservation, innovation and convenience. In order to preserve traditional patterns, imitation was used as a means to succeed. Attempting to create new style, imitation was a starting point followed by reinterpretation. Due to inaccessibility, imitation occurred as a result more than an intention. To make market appeal, imitation was commonly adopted to capture audience's attention efficiently. In this sense imitation was made only to make profit. For instance, in terms of the popularity of opera figures in Yu County, other styles would practice the topic to compete the market.

The finding suggested dimensional background of the outcome and projected two messages. First, different intentions influenced the degree of imitation and resulted in different outcomes. Second, the threat from imitation motivated artists to new design. The key point here was that the imitation was not all in connection to negative perspective acknowledged by common understanding but also contributed to innovation.

The definition of innovation discussed in previous chapter was in relation to content design, material and style. The cases suggested an apparent difference in design method between the north and the south areas appeared to associate with local custom, local resource and artistic community. Also, combining concepts was the measure adopted significantly. From the finding

it was discovered that north style inclined to extend the idea of preservation. The case for this issue would be packaging design discovered in Yu County that innovated the art in both aesthetic (new imagery) and functional (protection) perspectives. In this sense, extra design was in connection to adding value to improve the status of the art and branding. By contrast, the south style tended to experiment dynamic attempts in aspects of content, material and style. For instance, deriving ideas from different cultural elements to content design, adopting metal material in addition to fragile paper selection, changing the form from two dimensional to three dimensional. Cases demonstrated that applying art to daily articles was in attempt to make the art accessible.

## **6.6 Theory formation**

The interpretations above provided an elaborated explanation of the impact of drivers that have not been addressed from the archival data. The concept that competitors and customer preference influenced styles indicated the continuous development paper cutting art and abundant potentials to innovation. In this sense the approaches proposed by artists also appeal to practitioners in other art field. This overview of theoretical framework can be seen in Figure 6.1 and is further discussed in the following below.

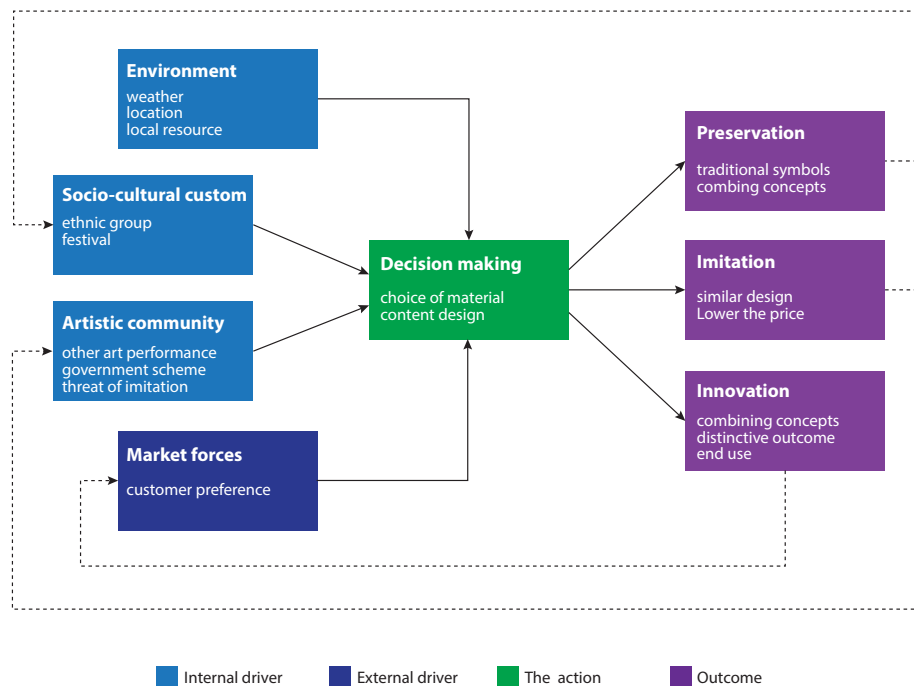


Figure 6.1 Theoretical framework

Figure 6.1 illustrates four mechanisms attribute to artist action and result in three outcomes. The framework encapsulates relationships between sectors draws a comprehensive explanation of the development. Blue colour coding signals ‘influential drivers’ that are classified to internal and external and each driver is consisted of sub-drivers suggest complexity of influences. In this sense three sectors are identified to the group of internal drivers. First, the environment driver comprises weather, location (accessibility) and local resource. The elaborated sub-sectors provides a more through explanation that environmental influence is not limited in geography but alongside distinctive material for inspiration. In this sense, metal material (Guangdong style) and special creatures (e.g. peacock, elephant) in certain area facilitates distinctive design. Second, the area of socio-cultural custom refers to ethnic group, festival and government scheme. In this place it is discovered that a mixed cultural society provides inspiration to artists and is considered a convenient approach to innovation. In relation to preserve traditional art, local traditional festival appears to stimulate

the art development continuously. Moreover, with the support from the government the art is able to develop in a more organized and regular term. In this sense art activity such as theme competition and art association provides platform for artists to learn and promote that facilitates creativity and rises the idea of preservation. Third, the section of artistic community is regarding to other art performance (e.g. Chinese opera and embroidery) and the threat from imitation. In this sense it is discovered that traditional art forms have mutual influences and result in innovation. And, the interaction between artists brings positive influence like obtaining inspiration as well as the negative side such as imitation therefore the threat from imitation becomes a stimulator to new design as a result. The discovery of the dimensional types of internal drivers provides explicit analysis that is consistent with literatures as well as supplements the ambiguous area of the study.

In addition to internal drivers, market force as classified to external section completes the overall theory. In terms of the change of society, different types of challenges occur and contribute to art transformation from a home recreation to commercial product, therefore customer preference appears to play a significant role as a result.

Consequently, with the indication of four influential drivers points to artist action reaffirms the theory that variables of design are resulted from dimensional perspectives. The followed influence is discussed in the next paragraph.

‘The action’ coded in green colour represents decision making that involves with the choice of material and content design and leads to three ‘outcomes’ (coded in purple). First, the area of preservation comprises two issues: remaining traditional style (e.g. material, symbols) and combining concepts. In this sense designs appear to exhibit multiple types of traditional art. For instance, depict Chinese legendary story and package in the form of storybook. Here, packaging measure further strengthens the sense of preservation. Second, the result of imitation correlates to two aspects: similar design and low price in the market place. It is

discovered that similar designs decrease the market price suggests that distinctive works are evaluated higher value. Third, the outcome of innovation consisted three aspects: measure of combining concepts, distinctive outcome, and end use. In this sense combining concepts includes reinterpreting other traditional art (e.g. lantern design, embroidery) with paper cutting technique. Distinctive outcome expresses through new material and regional patterns. The end use refers to the diversity of the use of the art and the range is from home decoration to religious use.

It should be noted that minor influences occur between drivers and outcomes. In this sense preservation attributes to socio-cultural custom, imitation has impact on artistic community and innovation associates with market forces.

According to the framework two points became apparent. First, paper cutting art in China is developed diversely and involves with dimensional areas that have mutual influences. Second, the indication of the relationships offers practical suggestions for developing a traditional art that would be appeal to relevant practitioners.

## **6.7 Locating the theory within the body of knowledge**

This research conceptualized findings paralleled archival reference and established connections between contexts. Through the analysis of archival data the new classification system was generated in order to understand the development of a traditional art, the potential of an ancient art could be possibly evolved. Through the interpretation of interview data influential drivers for variables of paper cutting style in China have been explored in accordance with the explanation in dimensional perspectives. This chapter discussed findings that supplemented and challenged existing theory that were considered contributions to the area.



The first contribution relates to the archival analysis, the purpose of new classification system was to clarify the variables of regional styles. The classification observed from archival data suggested inadequacy. For instance, classified styles base on geographic terms might overlook specified features. Zhu [2010, p.20] and He [2004, p.18] proposed the Yellow River and the Changjiang River distinguished styles into three groups: the north, the middle and the south; fourteen styles have been highlighted. Determine styles by singular criterion might neglect the influence caused by others. Zhang [2005] classified styles based on aesthetic features and ten styles have been identified: Zhejiang (thin line style), Guangdong (metal material), Yunnan/Guizhou/Sichuan (ethnic group), Shaanxi (traditional patterns), Northeast, Hebei (distinct colouring technique) and Hubei/Hunan.

A key distinction of classification system between archival and new version was that the former predominantly determined by singular sector, whereas the later illustrated dimensional perspectives. The new method was supplemented to Shu [2005, pp.8-11] that combined both geographic and aesthetic terms, and highlighted more representative styles regarding to government award list. In this sense forty styles have been addressed that delivered the idea that a region could cultivate more than one style. This theory further supported the classification method used in China paper cutting museum that only introduced one style for one region. Furthermore, in order to show differentiations, each style was exemplified by awarded representative's work. Colour coding and illustrated map was designed to represent geographic sense (see Figure 4.10). Also, each style was introduced explicitly in the table of eight categories: area, name of province, code, name of the style, generalized distinct features, imagery, representative and popularity (see Table 4.6). This measure was the first attempt in the field that manifested variables of design in regions showed diverse development of the art.

In relation to answer the research questions: what are styles of paper cutting art typify the regions in China and what explains the variations in paper cutting styles, the finding from interpretation of interview data showed a holistic view comparing to archival data that mainly

illustrated the development in brief and narrow scale. Sun, Ji and Li [2008, p.72] discussed styles alongside the Yellow River focusing on artistic technique. He [2004, p.18] pointed the differentiation between the north and the south was determined by geography and local art activity. And the south style is influenced by carving craft, paper production, wizard culture, costume design, lantern festival and local economy. Rong [2010, p.331] proposed factors like geography, local custom, cultural background, aesthetic preference influence styles and exemplified representative styles in aesthetic-oriented description. Wang [2010, p.35] pointed four influential drivers briefly: shape of applied article, history and environment (weather, economy, culture), material and tool, and artist preference.

The finding was generated by archival and empirical data and dimensional aspects were outlined: influential drivers, actions and outcomes, and was considered the first attempt to analyze the cause in specified classification. The section of influential drivers was classified to internal and external. The group of internal drivers contained environment, socio-cultural custom and artistic community, and each issue was elaborated to sub sectors. The environment driver contained weather, location and local resource that supplemented to Wang's theory. The socio-cultural custom comprised festival and ethnic group parallel with He's theory to the south style. Artistic community consisted of government scheme (competition, class, exhibition), other art performance and threat of imitation supplemented to He, Rong, and Wang's theory and additionally highlighted imitation was considered a driver to positive outcome. In relation to external driver, marketing forces referred to customer preference was parallel with He's theory that economy contributed to variables in styles. Also, the study draw on differentiations between the north and the south was resulted from the definition toward the art and people's characters in addition to geography that supplemented the theory of Sun, Ji and Li. Furthermore, discussions of action and outcome sections involved with innovative approaches suggested by regional representatives provided practical references that would appeal to relevant practitioners.

The theoretical framework (Figure 6.1) signified connections of influential drivers, action and outcomes showed explicit analysis of art development in a more thorough perspective. This measure was considered the first attempt in the field.

## **6.8 Summary**

The chapter has addressed the relationship between influential drivers and outcomes and offered a transparent discussion of the analysis of findings based on interview transcripts. In explaining influential drivers that have impact on variation of paper cutting art in China, a multi-dimensional analysis was provided that elaborated on both internal and external sectors. Prior to interpreting primary data, the chapter addressed the research area and questions underpinning the topic followed by an introduction to the research methods. With the aforementioned information the findings could then be examined.

In order to capture the best research results, nine interviews were undertaken with paper cutting shop owners, curators and artists across three provinces (Hebei, Jiangsu, Fujian provinces) in China. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher to ensure the accuracy of transcription. The phase of translating and transcribing aided the researcher to better understand the data and facilitated the subsequent analytical process. In describing influential drivers analysed from interview transcripts, every effort was made to provide accuracy and justification. Each proposed influential driver emerged through deriving information and interpreting data. Challenges and solutions adopted by interviewees in response to influential drivers are also discussed. The synthesis of findings in relation to the archival data was presented in a numerical structure. Through the overview of the findings through these three stages, the complexity of influential drivers along with diversified design method was elaborated.

Based on the analysis of primary data, internal and external drivers for variation of paper cutting styles and the consequential outcomes have been discussed respectively. In an attempt

to make a clear the understanding of the findings, the analysis was supplemented with tabulated and visual descriptions. The implication of these findings is discussed in the final chapter, where results are synthesised with previous findings (presented in chapter 3 and 4) and considered alongside the literature (chapter 2).

## **7 Avenues for further investigation**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Having studied the origin and development of Chinese paper cutting, this chapter further investigates the broader genre of paper cutting. The interest here is to discover how paper cutting has been developing outside China and how the art has been incorporated into modern design. In order to ascertain future prospective for the art, this study exemplified a number of different aspects within the cases explored.

Cases were selected from archival data from the web and through publications. The search for paper cutting art has extended across many countries and the aim of the research is to explore the developments of paper cutting art as a cultural medium, therefore cases were selected only if the art had been developed as national folk art. Similarly, consideration also had to be given as to whether many of the modern examples of paper cutting art, such as applied decoration to products, should be included in the cases. Accordingly, a definition of what could be accepted as paper cutting art was provided to enable greater transparency of case selection. Therefore, for a case to qualify as paper cutting art, it must: be created by paper and not from any other materials such as sheet plastic or metal; the art must be two dimensional with cut regions; the art is characteristically intricate and hollow; related paper art areas such as paper sculpture, collage, origami, paper tole and parchment craft were excluded.

This chapter aims to explore how the art has been developed in other countries and how the art has been applied to modern design. Prospects for the future study are proposed to further knowledge within the field.

## **7.2 Paper cutting art in Asia and beyond**

Paper cutting art has developed as a folk art in many countries beyond China each exhibits different stylistic feature. Features of the art are varied according to local customs, distinctive cultural traits, aesthetic values and resulted many different forms that in turn have determined different usage. In China, paper cutting is used to fulfil both spiritual and divinatory needs. In other cases, the use of the art is diverse and the development of the art form has altered depending on different societal and governing policy.

According to George Jacobs, paper cutting art first spread to Austria and eventually travelled along the trade routes to Europe [Geiser, 1994, p.121; Malone, 1998, p.9]. Historical records indicated that the earliest western paper cuttings were designed for religious purposes [Jablonski, 1978, p.37]. The practice became a secular art form at the end of the medieval period and developed into ‘scherenschnitte’ (the German name for the art) and ‘wycinanki’ (the Polish name for the art) [Christensen, 1989, p.15].

The art form can yield a wide range of results depending on the type of paper used, the number of folds and the style of design [Malone, 1998, p.10]. Referring to Chen and Tao [2008, p.1] that people in Israeli Jewish prefer symmetrical composition while in Mexico, artists tend to use mysterious images to pictorial scenes. In order to gain a holistic understanding of the art in its widest form, this thesis explores the existence of paper cutting art beyond its Chinese heritage. The examples examined in the research focus on those cultures that have developed the art into a distinctive cultural tradition and where the art can be clearly seen as forming an integral part of the regions cultural heritage.

### **7.2.1 Japan – Monkiri/ Kirigami**

In Japan, the idea of paper cutting art was initially used for printing textiles as stencils [Malone, 1998, p.9]. According to Christensen [1989, p.13] that about the middle of Heian

period (794-1185), high-ranking members of imperial court started to wear designed robes to signify family and clan status. In this case, symbols like lotus blossoms, plum and cherry blossoms, as illustrated in Figure 7.1, were coloured (stencil dyeing) on the robes and gradually changed to embroider instead. Symbols displayed on textile, which appear in formal and state occasions, are called 'mon'. People who are from powerful family have its own crests and each of them possesses two symbols, one is for important occasion and the other is for daily use. It is believed to be the start of paper cutting in Japan and is called 'Monkiri' [Christensen, 1989, p.13].

The art became widespread during the Kamakura period (1185-1333), which was ruled by military government. It was commonly placed on banners, flags and weapons to tell individual teams and troops in wars. The artistic development of Monkiri achieved high point during Tokugawa period (1600-1867). Designs were embroidered on Kimonos. The art was then developed to kirigami in the period of Meiji (1868-1912), which contains both folding and cutting techniques. The difference of art style between Monkiri and Kirigami is that Kirigami contains more elaborate design. Nowadays Monkiri becomes a family activity [Christensen, 1989, pp.13-14].

There are two popular paper crafts in Japan which are Origami and Kirigami. Compare to Origami that is made with folding technique, Kirigami, as illustrated in Figure 7.2, involves in both layering folding and intricate cutting [origami-resource-center, 2011; Hayakawa, 2009, p.2]. Kirigami is a variation of Origami. The oldest Kirigami was designed in temples for religious ceremonies [oru-kami, 2010]. Literally, 'Kiri' means to cut and 'gami' refers to paper [Hayakawa, 2009, p.6]. Hence kirigami signifies paper cutting. In order to make symmetry designs, the paper is folded before cutting then flattened [wikipedia, 2011; lovetoknow-origami, 2006-2011]. Subjects like snowflakes, pentagrams and orchid are commonly depicted [Christensen, 1989, p.14]. Also, with folding techniques, the art is transferred to three dimensions, like pop-up cards, as illustrated in Figure 7.3, and is

considered to be an innovation of Chinese paper cutting [papercraftcentral, 2011]. The art form in Japan is diverse from simple patterns to more complex designs. In terms of its dimensional presentation, the flat art is transformed to model of architecture. Tools like paper, a pencil and scalpel knife are basic to the art [squidoo, 2011].

In recent years Kirigami is mainly used for greeting cards, gift-wrap and ornament design. Also, patterns are implemented into product design, as illustrated in Figure 7.4. Moreover, the art is regarded as a lesson in elementary schools [Christensen, 1989, p.14]. In this case, the art is classified into a lesson as a way to preservation. Relevant publications provide templates accordingly.



Figure 7.1 Examples of Mon of Japan's greatest military leaders

Source: reproduced from Christensen [1989, p.13]



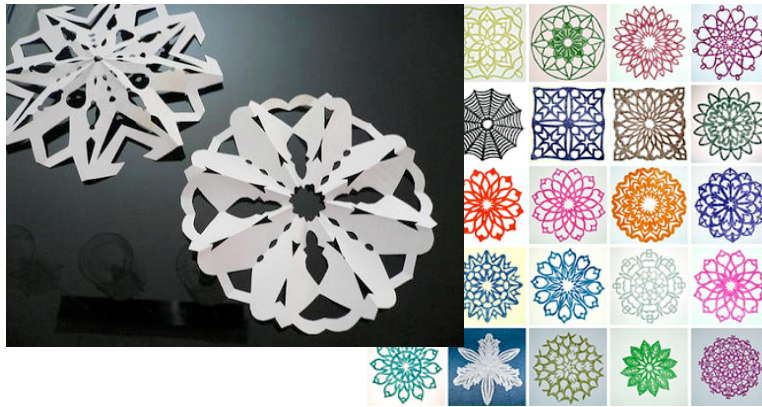


Figure 7.2 Examples of Kirigami

Source: reproduced from [curbly.com/Affinity](http://curbly.com/Affinity) [2007], [eastchesterlibrary.org](http://eastchesterlibrary.org) [2011]

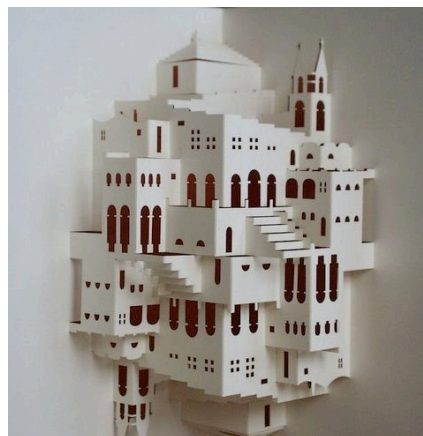


Figure 7.3 Examples of Kirigami, pop-up card

Source: reproduced [papercraftcentral](http://papercraftcentral.com) [2011]



Figure 7.4 Examples of products inspired by Kirigami

Source: reproduced from yorokobinokatachi [2002-2007]

### 7.2.2 Mexico - Papel picado

Papel picado is the Spanish phrase for ‘perforated paper’. The origin can be traced back to Aztecs, the nation that came in Mexico before the Spanish invasion [DLTK’s Countries and Cultures, 1998-2011]. It is a unique style of paper cutting and has its own tradition. Initially Aztecs mashed mulberry and tree barks between rocks to produce paper. Men cut trees and women made the art [Bercovitch, 2007; Trenchard, 1998]. The art was used in religious ceremony to represent spirits of human and animals. Local gods and goddesses were subjects for creation at that time. The trend of the art changed in 1519 after the Spanish came to the land. Different traditions and techniques were infused in native society. Also, with the increasing trading activities with China and America, the art started evolving to new phase [celebrate-day-of-the-dead, 2010-2011].

Paper cutting art became popular when tissue paper was invented. Cutting tools were then changed from scissors to knives. Similar to the cutting technique used in the north part of China, artists in Mexico accumulate forty to fifty brightly coloured tissue paper and cut them with hammers and chisels at a time [Graza, 1999, p.60]. Those then are glued to a string in a line to form banners as decorations, which are called ‘banderitas’, as illustrated in Figure 7.5 [Garza, 1999, p.6]. Banners of papel picado are hang outside town and village churches and also show up in celebrations such as weddings, baptisms and funerals as decorations, as

illustrated in Figure 7.6 [Sayer, 1990, p.135]. Also, this type of craft can be found in national holidays like 'Days of the Dead', Easter, Christmas and Independence Day. Depending on different kinds of occasions, various colours are designed to meet the needs. For instance, purple, white and pink are used for 'Days of the Dead', and each of them signifies pain, hope and celebration [care2, 2011].

It is worth mentioning that skeletons and religious imageries are popular especially for festivals, although such kind of imagery related to death is not welcome in the Eastern culture, as shown in Figure 7.7 [aprendelo, 2010]. In this case skeletons are depicted in funny ways (such as riding bicycles, drinking alcohols, getting married and playing instruments) that indicates the style in this region is humorous. Also, it suggests that the horror name of the festival 'Day of the dead' remains its dark meaning literally. In Mexico death is regarded as a part of life and the aim of the celebration is to reunite with the dead. Therefore paper cutting art in this region presents festive and interesting style and gradually becomes a tourist attraction as a result [Sayer, 1990, p.136; celebrate-day-of-the-dead, 2010-2011].

Furthermore, in the aspect of innovation, modern artists provide customised service to do portraits and sceneries invitation cards, as illustrated in Figure 7.8. Besides commercialising the art, workshops are offered to young generation in order to preserve the tradition. On the other hand, new material such as plastic sheet is invented to replace paper to deal with the problem of colour fading [Barbezat, 2011].



Figure 7.5 Illustration of banderitas

Sources: reproduced from freewebs.com [2011]



Figure 7.6 Example of paper cuttings used in altar in Mexico City

Sources: reproduced from celebrate-day-of-the-dead.com [2010-2011]

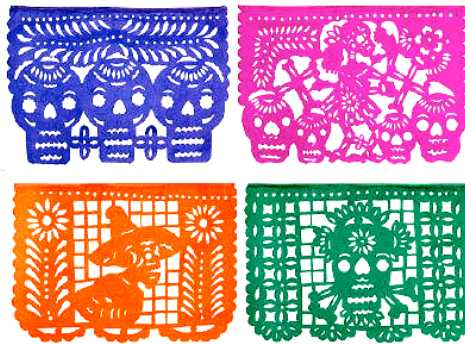


Figure 7.7 Examples of skeleton paper cuttings in Mexico  
Sources: reproduced from Zanzibar Tribal Art Gallery [2011]



Figure 7.8 Example of customised paper cutting portrait  
Sources: reproduced from Cut-It-Out, Kathleen Trenchard's Studio [2011]

### 7.2.3 Germany – Scherenschnitte

Scherenschnitte (pronunciation: shear-n-SNIT-a) is a German word refers to 'scissor cuts' [Anon, 2011; Wikipedia, 2010; Jablonski, 1978, p.37]. It is the name of paper cutting in both Germany and Switzerland [Wikipedia, 2010]. The art was founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and was brought to Colonial America during the late 18th and 19th centuries by immigrants who came from Pennsylvania. According to Geiser [1994, pp.124-126], Rudolf Wilhelm Herr von Stubenberg (1645-1677) was the first artist in this field and created white cutwork, as illustrated in Figure 7.9. In early times, people showed likeness of loved ones by capturing

imageries of shadows, hence cutting portraits was fashionable and was regarded as a upper class activity. It was a common trend among the upper classes to produce entire family trees with portraits cut from paper. In this place paper cutting art was presented as silhouette and executed premeditated and realistic [Jablonski, 1978, p.37]. It is interesting to note that a tool was designed specially to make paper cuttings efficiently, as shown in Figure 7.10 [Geiser, 1994, p.125; Christensen, 1989, p.16]. In addition, the art was regarded a type of performance for royalty. Paper cutting artists played cutting shows in social parties for entertainment [Shu, 2009, p.6].

Unlike the majority of paper cutting artist is female in China, male are the key performers in Germany [associatedcontent, 2011]. Men do the craft on the streets for a penny to people passing by the roads [squidoo, 2011]. Also, the art is commonly used to express affection for birthday gifts, special occasions and love letters. Paper cuttings are used to deliver adoration to lovers [Shu, 2009, p.12]. The initial feature is symmetric in black and white and gradually involves to water colours, as shown in Figure 7.11. Knives with sharp blades are used majorly instead of scissors [Geiser, 1997, p.16]. Natural scenery is popularly depicted including animals and plants. In addition, scenes like celebrations and special events are topics in this case [Jablonski, 1978, p.10]. The art is also used for decorating eggs, as illustrated in Figure 7.12.

Paper cuttings in China contain cultural meanings while the art in Germany is mainly used for decoration. The initial idea of paper cutting in Germany is to record loved ones figures before the invention of cameras and gradually becomes a medium to express feelings. In recent years artists infuse the art into movies and installation. Also, intricate concept is implemented to card and ornament design.





Figure 7.9 Example of R. W. Hus's work

Source: reproduced from Geiser [1994, p.127]



Figure 7.10 Illustration of silhouette chair

Source: reproduced from Geiser [1994, p.125]



Figure 7.11 Example of water coloured cutting

Source: reproduced from eng.szairport.com [2007]

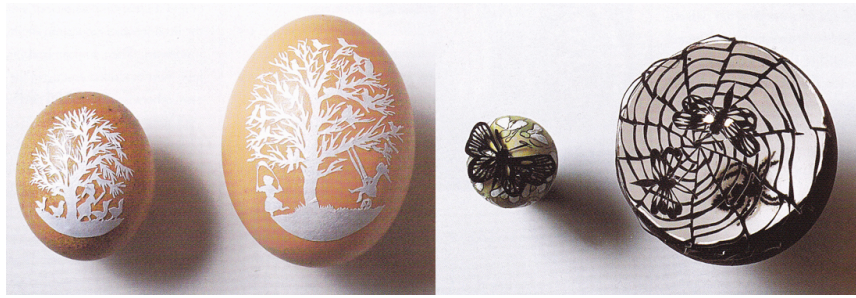


Figure 7.12 Examples of scherenschnitte design decorated on eggs

Source: reproduced from Geiser [1994, p.106]

#### 7.2.4 Poland – Wycinanki

Wycinanki, pronounced as vee-chee-nan-kee, is a Polish word for paper cutting art and originated from the mid-eighteenth century [Jablonski, 1978, p.3; Christensen, 1989, p.15]. At that time people took tree bark and leather to do designs and gradually used sheep shearing shears instead [Wikipedia, 2011]. Similar to China, women are main creators in this country. It was inspired by tapestries and gradually evolved to paper cuttings in peasant cottages [Joyce, 1997]. The art is used for decoration and appears on ceiling beams, walls, furniture, windows, as illustrated in Figure 7.13. Unlike red is predominant in China, bright blue is considered the popular colour for walls. Scissors are the main tool in this field [Polish Traditions, 2011]. In terms of fragile material, designs are replaced once it starts to decay. Today houses are built in modern way and the art is no longer used for wall decorations [Jablonski, 1978, pp.3-6; Geiser, 1994, p.130].

Another similarity occurs between China and Poland is that various styles are developed in terms of geographic reason; Wycinanki also manifests unique features in different regions. The most renowned styles are single coloured Kurpie (in the north area of Poland near Warsaw) as illustrated in Figure 7.14 and multi-coloured Lowicz (the west of Warsaw) as illustrated in Figure 7.15 [Jablonski, 1978, p.5]. Paper cutting art in Kurpie is symmetry and considered the general style commonly used as wallpaper. Natural scenery is mostly depicted including animals and plants (especially flowers and birds are traditional topics) [montessoriworld, 2011]. Farm animals like rooster, pig, hen, goose and duck are



predominate characters in Polish culture and design. In addition, it is interesting to note that rooster in Poland is interpreted as fertility and Easter that symbols good luck. Cockerel is mainly used during Easter time [Jablonski, 1978, pp.5-18].

On the other hand, Lowicz style specializes in depicting village activities, as illustrated in Figure 7.16. This style is classified to three forms: ‘Gwiozdy’ refers to round design (as illustrated in Figure 7.17), ‘Kodry’ refers to rectangular shape (as illustrated in Figure 7.15) and vertical style is classified to ‘Tasiemki’ (as illustrated in Figure 7.18) [Information service to promote Polish folk art on the world, 2003]. Designs are determined according to different festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Also, the pattern of the art is applied to costume design used in celebrations, as illustrated in Figure 7.19. In addition, it is worth mentioning that Tasiemki (as illustrated in Figure 7.18) are worn hanging from the belts of men’s typical costumes and brides’ headdresses. Furthermore, patterns are used for decorating eggs at Easter time. In this place, Lowicz style manifests unique tradition of Polish and is acknowledged a contribution to preserving cultural heritage [Jablonski, 1978, pp.19-21].

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that paper cutting competitions are held regularly to stimulate new design [Jablonski, 1978, p.10]. Also, the art is applied to product design as a selection of gift, as illustrated in Figure 7.20 [Polish Traditions, 2011].



Figure 7.13 Examples of paper cuttings in Poland

Sources: reproduced from Krzysztof Bąk [2013]



Figure 7.14 Examples of paper cuttings in Kurpie

Sources: reproduced from Kristen [2011]



Figure 7.15 Example of paper cutting in Lowicz ('Kodry')

Sources: reproduced from Polish Art Center [2011]



Figure 7.16 Example of paper cutting in Lowicz style, 'A wedding'

Sources: reproduced from Polish Traditions [2011]



Figure 7.17 Example of a paper cutting in Lowicz ('Gwiozdy')

Sources: reproduced from Geiser [1994, p.131]



Figure 7.18 Examples of paper cuttings in Lowicz ('Tasiemki')

Sources: reproduced from Wikipedia [2011], galeriafolk.pl [2014]



Figure 7.19 Illustration of celebration in Lowicz

Source: reproduced from Tomasz Kopalski [2009]



Figure 7.20 Examples of products in Lowicz style

Source: reproduced from Polish Art Center [2012], folkstar.pl [2014]

### 7.2.5 Jewish paper cutting

Jewish paper cutting has circulated across the world and developed in terms of different cultures in various regions [Geiser, 1994, p.138]. This type of art was appeared widely among the Jews of Poland, Russia and German [Frankel, 1959, p.2]. Also, there were traces found in the Middle East and North Africa. Referring to Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.19] and Frankel [2002], the earliest Jewish paper cutting was suggested appearing in the 14<sup>th</sup> century from travel to the Far East. However, the art has not become familiar until 17<sup>th</sup> century in German. Male artists were the majority of participants including pupils, students, teachers and their assistants [Frankel, 2002]. The art was mainly applied for religious articles and ritual needs,

particular in prayer rooms. Also, it was used as amulets called 'kimpetbriefel' hung on walls to ward off harm from newborns [Geiser, 1994, p.138; Shadur and Shadur, 2002, p.21; Frankel, 1959, p.4]. In addition, the art was used for decoration for holidays. According to Geiser [1994, p.138], designs like the Star of David and the menorah were hung in the windows on the feast of the Sabbath.

In general, Jewish paper cutting manifests symmetric and geometric. According to Frankel [1959, p.3] and Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.21], the art is classified into three types: 'Mizrach' (Figure 7.21) also called 'Shiviti' (Figure 7.22), 'Shevuos'lech' (Figure 7.23) and 'Roiselech' (Figure 7.24), and 'TORAH'S FLAGS' (Figure 7.25). Mizrach is used in homes and Jewish church, hung on the wall to signal the direction of prayer. Mizrach was called 'Shiviti', when it was used in church. These two styles were commonly framed under glass. Works were made of white paper and painted in water colours. Inscriptions from the Holy texts were composed in the layout. The second group ('Shevuos'lech' and 'Roiselech') was served as decoration on windows. Shevuos'lech is designed in rectangle style and Roiselech is made in round shape. White is the main colour adopted in this type, others are rare. Torah's Flags shows up at festival of 'Simchat Torah' carried by children. Design subject of flags are symbols of twelve tribes combined with inscriptions. Creations were double sided and painted in colours [Frankel, 1959, pp.3-4].

Similar to Chinese paper cutting, Jewish style developed a great numbers of symbols. Referring to Frankel [2002], Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.21], it is common to see the Menorah with its seven branched candlestick are put in the centre of the graph; a crown, Magen David or an eagle are placed on the top of the picture; around there are animals, vegetation and geometrical forms, as shown in Figure 7.22. In this case, animals like lions, deer, eagles, tigers are considered to have special qualities according to the Holy Scriptures. It is interesting to note that Jewish also created twelve zodiac signs like Chinese to indicate specific years, as illustrated in Figure 7.26. Also, calligraphic inscriptions in Hebrew were



found in compositions. Some of inscriptions were in other languages and mainly from the Bible [Shadur and Shadur, 2002, p.21]. Names of artists were put at the bottom of the big Menorah.

Despite works were disappeared due to the extermination of the Jews in east Europe, the glory of the tradition is remained among old people and assembled in the possession of museums and private collectors. The art was being replaced by interior prints and then renewed by Israel and America [Frankel, 1959, p.5; Geiser, 1994, p.138].

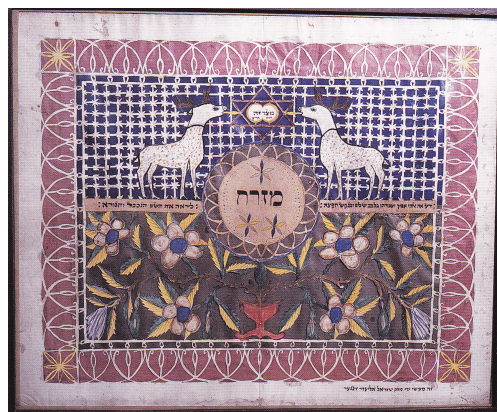


Figure 7.21 Example of a Jewish paper cutting in Mizrach style from Slovakia

Source: reproduced from Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.36]

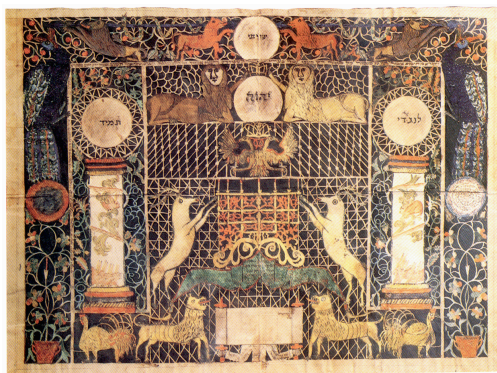


Figure 7.22 Example of a Jewish paper cutting in Shiviti style from Poland

Source: reproduced from Geiser [1994, p.139]



Figure 7.23 Example of a Jewish paper cutting in Shevuos'lech style

Source: reproduced from Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.32]

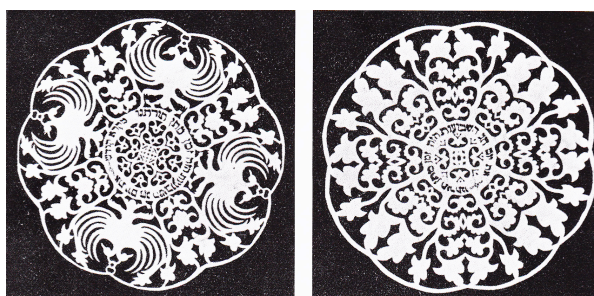


Figure 7.24 Examples of Jewish paper cutting in Roiselech style from Poland

Source: reproduced from Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.27]



Figure 7.25 Example of Jewish paper cutting in Torah's flag style

Source: reproduced from Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.84]

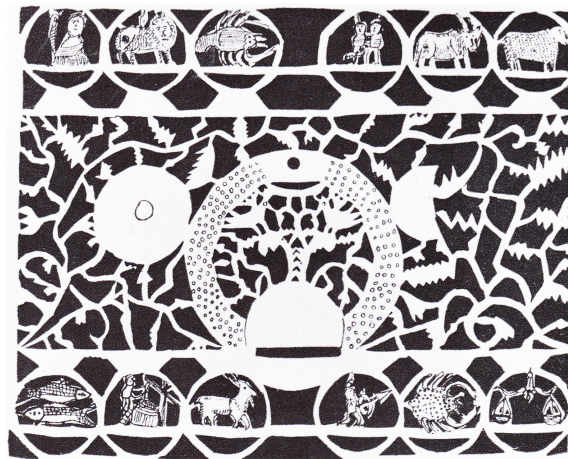


Figure 7.26 Example of a Jewish paper cutting: signs of Zodiac

Source: reproduced from Shadur and Shadur [2002, p.100]

### 7.3 Paper cutting techniques in contemporary art and design

In recent years the genre of paper cutting art has been evolving into new directions, beyond its traditional definition and flat and fragile form. Unlike Chinese paper cutting art that has numerous similar styles due to its inherited cultural rules, contemporary artists have no such boundaries but the freedom to infuse their imagination and personality into their work [Sloman, 2009, p.5]. In contrast to the traditional practice, contemporary artists remove the religious implications, symbolic value, symmetrical composition, deliberate folding methods and calculable cuts but emphasise both intricate and precise patterns [Kao, 2009, pp.11-17; Bai and Yu, 2009, pp.55-90]. In order to focus on the evolution of paper cutting art in recent



years examples of modern two-dimensional paper cutting art are discussed in section 7.4. Only art that involves with cutting techniques and paper production are included, hence paper sculptures, paper folding art and works related to paper cutting art but made in other materials beside paper are excluded in the thesis.

To understand how the traditional art form can be developed and commercialised, the investigation also explores the area of product design. The combination of traditional concepts with new interpretations and technologies leads the art into a new era. For example, laser cut technology enables handicrafts to be produced more accurately and efficiently. Also, in terms of quality control, it is feasible to implement advanced technique into production, which makes the art more enduring and timeless. Thai brand voravan, which produces a series of interior accessories inspired by Chinese paper cutting pattern, presents an example of this mix of traditional craft and new technology. PAPERSELF's paper eyelashes utilise Chinese symbolism as the primary concept and executes the idea into production through laser cutting techniques, which appears to open a new gate for high fashion accessories. This chapter discusses the development of paper cutting art into areas of home decoration/accessories, fashion accessories, paper products and product design.

#### **7.4 Contemporary artists**

Paper was originally made to be the substitute of bamboo and silk as a writing medium [Sloman, 2009, p.7]. However, through cultural heritage and artists' imagination it has expanded to mass application and paper cutting art is one of a kind. Paper, possess unique reputation among designers that has been acquired through continuous experimentation and application through the generations [Bramston, 2009, p.50]. In other words, it is not only allows artists to manipulate intuitive, but also easy to pass the work over. For over a decade of development, its strength and shortage have been experienced and result in new thoughts evoking. To stimulate old imagery, modern artist endeavour to create new visionary. In this place, making changes in motif design seems to be the most effective method to reach

revolution. In the article the research shows that artists not only apply imaginative illusion to creation but also incorporate with different cultures. Meanwhile, outstanding cutting technique also contributes to reinvention. On the other hand, it is interesting to discover how western artist regenerates oriental art. This section discusses how paper cutting artists present their personal vision through the art and the possibility for a change in the perception of paper cutting as a primitive art form.

#### **7.4.1 Xue Lu**

China based artist, Xue Lu is regarded to be new paper cutting artist in China and a representative for Chinese culture. Lu started cutting skills at age sixth from family member and then went to different counties to study unique regional styles. Through absorbing and discovering continuously, the artist stands out with poetic, narrative style in this field. With the attempt to bring traditional art to the world, Lu holds exhibitions and speeches in foreign countries. Also, in order to achieve cross-cultural designs, the artist infuses western imageries to refresh the old impression. For instance, in 1994, the work that used Anderson's fairy tales as motif design (112 pieces) has been collected by Denmark museums, as illustrated in 7.27 [Luxue, 2008]. In this case, the creation combines western culture with traditional paper cuttings has led the art to new phase.

On the other hand, in order to introduce Chinese culture to the world, Lu created Confucius stories with unique style, as illustrated in Figure 7.28. The artist believes that Confucius plays important role in Chinese cultural history that is worth of introducing to the world. The creation (over 300 pieces) was then exhibited abroad as well as showcased Confucius ideas internationally. In this case, the art conveys not only aesthetic form but also a historical story. In addition, attempting to make the art updated and attractive, the artist takes trendy events (such as television shows, Olympic games) and tourist sceneries (national parks) as design subjects. It is interesting to note that Lu makes paper cutting portraits for celebrities like NBA players, movie stars and influential people [Luxue, 2008] as a way to infuse traditional art

into daily life. The artist endeavours to combine conventional art with modern concepts and recently has associated with animation business.



Figure 7.27 Example of Anderson's fairy tales paper cutting 'The little match girl'

Source: reproduced from Luxue [2008]

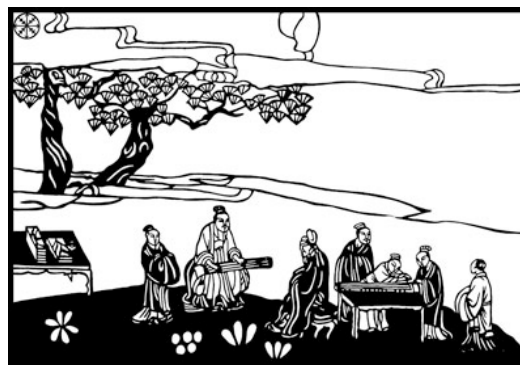


Figure 7.28 Example of Confucius paper cutting

Source: reproduced from Luxue [2008]

#### 7.4.2 Hina Aoyama

Hina Aoyama is a Japanese artist who was born in Yokohama and currently lives in Ferney Volaire, France [hinaaoyama, 2000]. Aoyama started paper cutting art in 2000 with no background but cutting tools that a friend gave her as a gift. The artist chooses singular colour to create extreme expression, which is black paper cuttings with white sheets as background. Shadows play dramatic character in Aoyama's work, which reflect graphs on white sheets and

result in dimensional effect, as illustrated in Figure 7.29. Exquisitely delicate and ethereal works that the artist specialises look like they required painstaking meticulousness but only accomplished by a pair of small scissors, as illustrated in Figure 7.30. Also, in order to exhibit delicate and fragile works in dimensional perspective, the artist puts paper cuttings into glasses, as shown in Figure 7.31. Aoyama is renowned for mellow cutting skill that cut paper like lace, which is a noticeable difference from Chinese paper cutting. This differentiation may not attribute to the ability of cutting technique but the use of the art. In China, paper cuttings are mainly for decorating walls, windows and furniture that require durability to glue. In this case, thin line style is not applicable therefore the end use determines art feature.

When speaking of motif design, the artist is prone to apply stories from surroundings and blend tradition with modern styles through finest techniques, as shown in Figure 7.32. The artist exhibits works worldwide constantly and some of creation have been collected and displayed in the Museum of Miniatures Lyon France, Hotel Horloger Geneva Swiss and the consulate of Thailand in Geneva. In order to fulfil the intention of putting the art into daily use, cooperating with fashion clothing brand and designed printed T-shirt line in 2010 was in attempt to achieve product line [hinaaoyama, 2000].



Figure 7.29 Example of Hina Aoyama's work

Source: reproduced from flickr.com [2010]



Figure 7.30 Illustration of Hina Aoyama's cutting procedure

Source: reproduced from Artsblog [2004-2011]



Figure 7.31 Example of Hina Aoyama's work

Source: reproduced from flickr.com [2010]

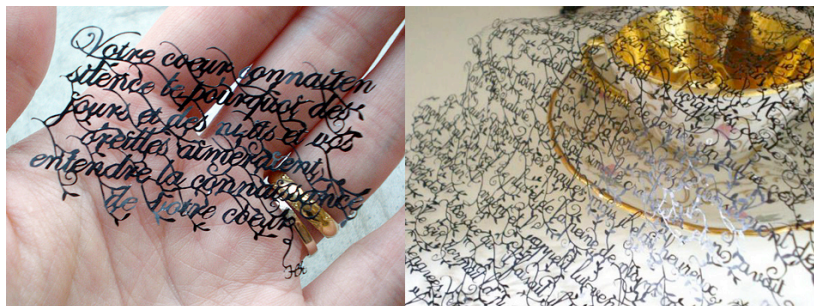


Figure 7.32 Example of Hina Aoyama's work

Source: reproduced from flickr.com [2010]

## **7.5 Commercial products inspired by paper cutting**

With the increasing rise in expectations of standards of living, the idea of consuming products seems to change unconsciously. Culture is a life style, while design is a sense of living [Lin, 2007, pp.72-84]. In order to deal with the global, highly competitive market, companies focus on emphasizing local features, establish unique identification and create sensational consuming experiences [Lin, 2007, pp.45-53]. According to McCracken, the intention that designers apply cultural elements to their creation is to interact with consumers [1986, pp.71-84]. In terms of people's intention of pursuing not only utilitarian but also aesthetic value to achieve personal expectation and recognition, cultural forms become influential to stimulate genuine feelings and affection. However, Armstrong (1991) argues that the popularity of hues, materials and styles may vary within two cultures. In attempting to know the development of paper cutting art in modern society, the chapter explores examples of how practitioners diversify the old art into new concepts for their brands. Cases discussed include fashion accessory, home decoration, gift industry and product design.

### **7.5.1 Paperself**

Launched in 2009, the London based brand offers three product lines: fashion, furniture and lighting. The main idea of this brand is paper and aims to produce eco-conscious living. The inspiration comes from Chinese paper cutting that derives traditional symbols (animals and flowers) to the design of paper eyelashes. The brand blends an element of Eastern culture with western technology and creates new interpretation that reforms the stereotype of eyelashes [PAPERSELF, 2010-2011]. For example, horses stand for success, butterfly refers to freedom, peacock means auspicious, peonies imply good luck and peach blossom illustrates a romance, as shown in Figure 7.33. According to Bloch [1995, p.22] that designers expect consumers to prefer products that communicate meanings that are desirable within a particular culture or subculture. Referring to this theory, PAPERSELF constitutes an interactive bridge between products and consumers. The method strengthens the impression to be narrative and improves the market appeal as a result.

In addition, it is not only the cultural significance makes the brand stands out in the market but the unique combination that there is no logical relevance between eyelash design and paper cutting art [Qiu, 2008, p.84]. Similarly, Ren'e Magritte [1898-1967] is the case in this point. 'By unexpected juxtaposition of common images, such as bedposts and sleigh bells, he challenges viewer expectations' [Stake and Kerr, 1995, p.55]. In this place, mix and match design method brings provocations to thoughts. Meanwhile, viewers may find pleasure and humor during the process of reconfirming the form. Also, the symmetrical composition creates vibrant atmosphere [Yu, 2009, p.141]. In the area of visual communication, multiplying objects is an approach to strengthen the topic and obtain aesthetic rhythm [Lin, Fang and Cheng, 2008, pp.75-75]. In this place the brand initiates new thought to the market instead of renewing old culture. Moreover, in order to contend with culture differences, branding internationally (modelling and website in English version) is the measure, as shown in Figure 7.34 [Bloch, 1995, p.22].



Figure 7.33 Designs by PAPERSELF

- a) Example of horse collection   b) Example of deer and butterfly   c) Example of peacock  
d) Example of peonies   e) Example of peach blossom

Source: reproduced from PAPERSELF [2011]



Figure 7.34 Examples of PAPERSELF modelling

Source: reproduced from PAPERSELF [2011]

### 7.5.2 Voravan

Established in 2007, the Thailand based brand offers home decorative items. In this case, Chinese paper cutting art is utilized as pattern design, as illustrated in Figure 7.35. The brand is renowned for its module concept and every piece is made of rubber in various colors (Figure 7.36) [voravan, 2011]. The usage of this series is flexible in terms of pieces are interlocking enables users to create forms according to their preferences. Also, in order to create a fun mode, units in different styles and colors are provided to suggest diversity of visual arrangement (Figure 7.37). Users are free to define function to better meet special enquiry, which is attributed to its moderate size. For instance, it can be a cluster in single segment also a wall decoration in a component, as shown in Figure 7.38. The key difference among product design and fine art is that from the perspective of design, attention draws on utility [Lin, Fang and Cheng, 2008, p.69]. In this place, the outline of the graph becomes a means of conjunction, as illustrated in Figure 7.39.

When speaking of the design concept, the brand derives two concepts from Chinese paper cutting. First, the brand simplifies complicated composition to organic style may relate to manufacturing concern. As suggested by Bloch [1995, p.18], it is crucial for designers to



decide materials and forms that are pertained to manufacturing environment and budget plan. Second, the end use of decorating walls is similar to the original concept. On the other hand, transform a complex part to a simple element and interpret it as a component to assemble other pieces is considered an innovation. In this place the brand provides interactive experiences [Costikyan, 1994, p.4]. Also, from the perspective of product design, Alben [1996] proposed ‘quality experience’. In this case, ‘experience’ includes aspects of how people use interactive product: ‘the way it feels in their hands, how well they understand how it works, how they feel about it while they’re using it, how well it serves their purposes, and how well it fits into the entire context in which they are using it. If these experiences are successful and engaging, then they are valuable to users.’

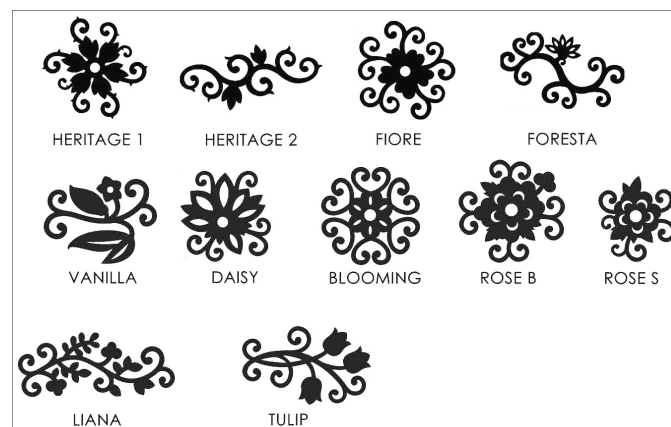


Figure 7.35 Examples of rubber collection. Provide in 3mm and 10mm thickness

Source: reproduced from voravan [2011]

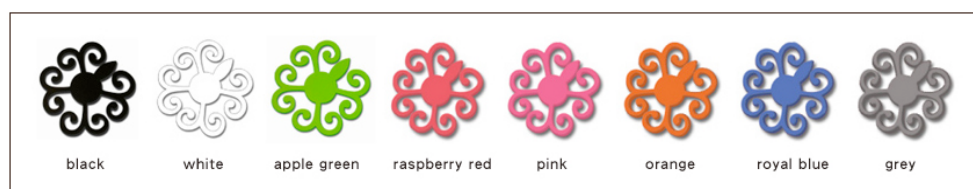
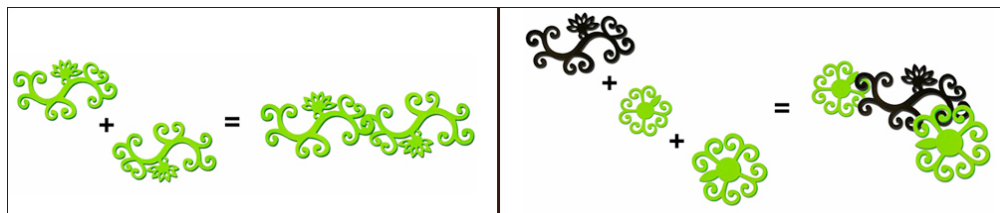


Figure 7.36 Mode of colour

Source: reproduced from voravan [2011]



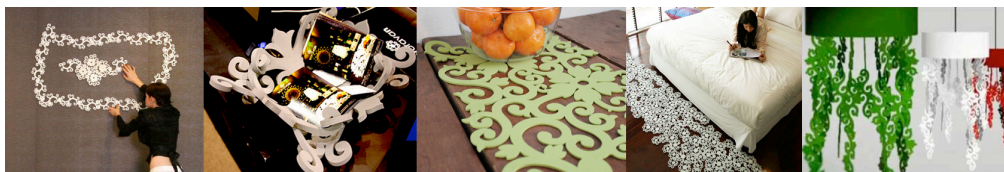
a)

b)

Figure 7.37 Diverse visual combination

a) Combine pieces in various dimensions    b) Combine different shapes and colours of pieces

Source: reproduced from voravan [2011]



a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

Figure 7.38 Examples of multiple usages

a) wall decoration    b) a basket    c) a cluster    d) a floor decoration    e) a lampshade

Source: reproduced from voravan [2011]



Figure 7.39 Demonstration of composition

Source: reproduced from Youtube [2010]

## 7.6 Summary

Paper cutting art originated in China but has subsequently developed in many countries across Europe and beyond. According to the different nationalities and cultural traditions, the art is manifested itself in many unique and distinguishing ways. In Germany, the art was used for recording figures of loved ones before photography was invented. Abstract images appear similar to an object's shadow. The purpose of the development of the art in this region was to express affection and the craft has been utilised as a medium to record and communicate. Unlike the originating art form in China, which contains symbolic significance, German artists have greater freedom to create scenes for storytelling. Meanwhile, there is a similarity between the Mexican use of paper cutting for celebrations and that of its Chinese origin. However, the art in Mexico presents brighter colours and the image of skeleton, which is used as a primary characteristic, would be unthinkable for the Chinese. This differentiation arises from the difference in cultural symbolism and attitudes towards festivals. The paper cutting art of Mexico features humour while it implies blessings in China. Jewish paper cutting has a rich symbolism in a similar manner as in China. Though the art is used in primarily in a religious context, it still manifests unique characteristics.

The art form in Poland presents different regional styles, as found in the diverse development of the craft in China, resulting in different characteristic forms. The Kurpie style demonstrates the foremost form in terms of single colour and symmetric composition while Lowicz style addresses local scenery and is regarded preserving cultural heritage. Paper cutting art in Poland is used for decoration as well as celebration and patterns have become inspirational for costumes and product design.

In Japan, the art is transformed to three dimensions with layering, folding and cutting techniques, enabling the art to become a form of sculpture. The gift business in Japan is dynamic and the idea of paper cutting has been abstracted into commercial products.

Furthermore, protecting the survival of the traditional art has always been a central concern for Japan; hence the art is present within the education system and taught in schools.

Apart from addressing the history of paper cutting art in Asian and beyond, this chapter has presented examples of contemporary artwork and products that the author considers to be derived from the craft of traditional paper cutting. In each case the design method and outcome has been discussed based on the conventional art form. Exploration of the development of traditional paper cutting art in modern products seems to hold great potential for further enquiry.

This enquiry has indicated that in contemporary paper cutting works, artists tend to bring their own interpretation of art resulting in innovation. The cases discussed in this chapter highlight the primary challenges encountered in the reinterpretation of the craft are design motif and material. To redefine traditional art, Chinese paper cutting artist Xue Lu blends eastern and western culture. Attempting to introduce Chinese culture to the world, Lu adopted Anderson's fairy tales to replace traditional symbolism. In this case, the invention in content design gains attention to other nationalities. By exhibiting cross-cultural works worldwide, Lu renews the traditional handicraft as well as promoting the native art form. Japanese artist Hina Aoyama's outstanding paper cutting skills constitute another development of the art. Aoyama specialism in cutting paper like lace has gained her international recognition as well as demonstrating how detailed paper cutting art can be executed. In order to incorporate modern imagery in the art, English text is implemented while retaining the traditional, intricate style.

In the area of product design, the importance of the traditional paper cutting art is illustrated as an idea for an intricate style of pattern design. The investigation has shown that paper cutting art has been extracted primarily by home decoration brands. However, the example from PAPERSELF, applying this art form to decorate different kinds of subject opens up possibilities in other design fields. The intricate imagery of paper cutting has been widely

used for commercial card and gift design. As a result, it is suggested that oriental culture has already provided inspiration to western art and is able to be further developed for a variety of products. Moreover, in considering product utility, designers may replace paper but reserve original colour (white) to present the beauty of simplicity and minimalism.

This chapter has discussed the existence and applications of paper cutting art that have developed beyond China and explored specific cases in contemporary art and design in order to gain a better understanding of how a traditional art can be reinvented for modern society. Through the study it became clear that although the art form in other countries does not have the same profound cultural significance comparing to China, the art has developed in many diverse styles and engrained within their cultural heritage. In order to see clear differentiation of paper cutting art outside China, Table 7.1 (Appendix D) provided a summary of the development, significance and applications of the art in previous mentioned countries. The primary notion of conveying symbols and decoration are still manipulated in many cultures although it is evident that a number of nations have transformed the traditional art into valuable and attractive objects for both the purpose of cultural preservation and commercialisation.

In addition, in an effort to explore how the concept of traditional art has been implementing to modern society, the chapter exemplified works that derived paper cutting imagery into creations. The study will be of use to artists and designers who attempt to develop traditional art into modern form and also for businesses associated with traditional industries. Furthermore, through the study of the development of the art in other country, the interest of discovering how the similar designs happen between countries and why they influence mutually begins to grow. The investigation is expecting to associate with case study dealing with artists in eastern and western world. For instance, Xi Ming Lin, a Shanghai based paper cutting artist is acknowledged as a eastern model of the western artist Henri Matisse (1869-1954), as illustrated in Figure 7.40 [Duan, 2008, p.87]. The paper cutting form of

‘Door hangings’ (Table 2.2) mostly appear in Shandong province (the east of China), also can be seen in Mexico. This study may involve with interviews, field trips and result in critical analysis of literature, comparisons and visual analysis to achieve further understanding.

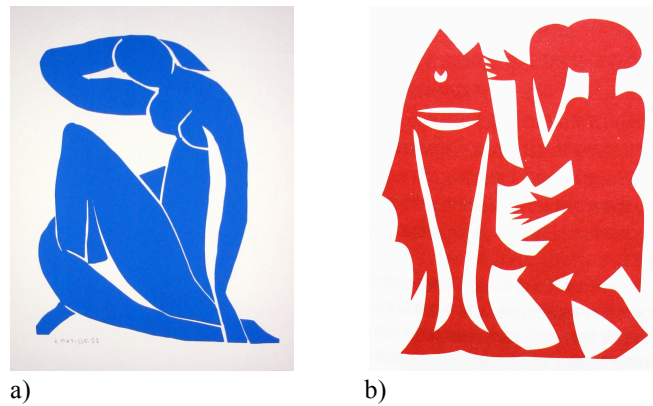


Figure 7.40 Works of a) Henri Matisse b) Xi Ming, Lin

Source: reproduced from Buchberg, Nicholas and Hauptman [2014, p.1], Zhu [2010, p.57]

## **8 Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Paper cutting art has been shown to exhibit variation in content, construction and application across the different regions of China. This research aimed to gain a theoretical understanding of the key influences on the generative process of creating Chinese paper cutting art. It was evident from the literature that an art form with a history of over 3000 years, has a propensity to develop continuously and has in recent times transformed from a folk art to a commercial product. In this regard, changes were apparent in aspects of content, technique (colouring and cutting) and form (application). In the area of motif design, traditional patterns were modernised to softer imagery in order to attract the young generation; social events depicted to refresh the old depictions in order to connect with the audience. Aspects of technique were likely to be developed in accordance with experimental of new materials and incorporated with particular topics. In addition, the applied object often determined the shape of the paper cut with the end use influencing the stylistic construction.

Variables in the development of the paper cutting art indicated both conceptual and pragmatic grounds for the development of a framework relating to the reasons and methods for preservation and innovation, which would be valuable for a range of practitioners in the field. Also, during the process of examining the key issues emerging from archival data, it became apparent that existing systems of classification were insufficient and failed to account for variations in regional styles. This theoretical gap reaffirmed the potential of the study and suggested the contribution to existing knowledge and directions for further research.

To address the gap in knowledge, the research study focused on exploring the variations in paper cutting styles within China and an explanation for these differences. A mixed methods approach was used for the purpose of generalising results for theoretical and educational use. An original system of classification, based on a theoretical review and visual analysis of

secondary resources, resulted from the first stage of this research. This work was followed by field observation and in-depth interviews to investigate explanations for the variation shown. The interpretation of interview data facilitated the generation of a theoretical framework that elucidates key issues involved in the development of the paper cutting art. This theory enables the author to contribute to the existing theory in two respects: a) to address the insufficient existing systems classification, and b) to enable detailed explanation for variations in regional styles. The subsequent sections address the findings and overall conclusions of the study.

## **8.2 Conclusions of research issues/problem/contribution**

This section addresses the principal findings alongside the general conclusions of the thesis. The key findings reported in chapters four to six are based on the analysis of archival information and data gathered through interpretations of interview data. Interviews were undertaken with two curators, two shop owners and five representative artists. Accordingly, the study makes two important original contributions to the body of knowledge. First, a new classification system provided in chapter four (Figure 4.10) addresses the theoretical gap raised in the literature (chapters two and four) therefore this study's contribution lies in providing an extensive system of classification incorporating visual examples, based on both archival and visual analysis. Second, the theoretical framework provided in chapter six (Figure 6.1) advances existing theory by presenting a systematic approach for explaining variations in regional styles.

The classification system presented incorporates visual examples and influential drivers, alongside brief textual description, examples of key representative artists and the population of artists within each area (see Figure 4.10 and Table 4.5). This approach endeavors to identify a number of unidentified styles that are currently overlooked in earlier studies. The literature review highlighted the limitations of current theoretical and pragmatic systems and methods for classifying the numerous and diverse styles of paper cutting in China (chapter four). Therefore, the rationale for addressing this limitation was to supplement the



classification methods by drawing on previous theories, government documentation, and systems used in museum management. The method extends Shu's [2005, pp.8-11] theory that incorporates geographic location and artistic features as a means of classification. Consequently, this approach advances the existing research paradigms and suggests a system that has the potential to contribute towards museum and educational purposes.

Chapter five provides a conceptual foundation supporting a geographical and environmental perspective, where variables present differently in the northern and southern areas of China. The chapter empirically explores aspects of genres such as government policy, historical sites, aesthetic perspectives, economic development, and educational instrument. Drawing on case studies, this work addresses the key issues, debates and prescriptions within the literature. Case study research suggested that, in addition to artists' efforts, governmental policy is considered a factor of significant influence. This method of investigation has addressed the development of the art in a multi-dimensional capacity, which is the first study of its kind over this large area. The research identified determinants of variations, where additional research is needed to examine the significance and interdependence of these (chapter six).

The key findings of the thesis are presented in chapter six. The theoretical contributions are discussed within this chapter are two-fold. First, influential drivers acting on variations in Chinese paper cutting styles are not limited in single sphere. This complexity, inter-relationship and interdependency of factors have not previously been considered in earlier studies of Chinese paper cutting (chapter four). Second, the theoretical framework (Figure 6.1) draws on connections and relationship between these influential drivers, and considers the actions and outcomes that explain changes in the design and innovation. A number of key points that emerged from the process of analysis and the generation of the framework are noted below.

The influential drivers are classified as internal or external with each divided into subsections for analysis that were used to structure the theoretical framework. The external drivers indicated the challenges encountered in modern society alongside responses (or actions), which have not been addressed in previous literature. This appears to be due to a focus on aesthetic performance rather than marketing and product development (chapter four). Consequently, the findings highlight areas such as imitation and marketing forces, which have had limited attention in the literature. A typology of influential drivers (Table 6.1) and a theoretical framework (Figure 6.1) conceptualise the relationship between influential drivers, the actions and the outcome, providing a comprehensive account of the development of paper cutting art.

From the review of literature, the narrow scope of analysis of drivers acting on regional styles of paper cutting is readily apparent. Sun, Ji and Li [2008] and He [2008] focused solely on geography, whereas Rong [2010] stated four influential drivers: geography, local custom, cultural background and aesthetic preference, although subsequently failed to provide further theoretical explanation of what constitutes changes in styles, what actions contribute the resultant change or what kind of outcomes have resulted. Similarly, Wang [2010] proposed four drivers: end use, environment, technique and artistic preference, but with no reference to connections of influence, action and outcome. Therefore this research extends existing theory by incorporating insights gathered from artistic representatives.

Moreover, this thesis provides a methodological contribution through the construction of the conceptual framework drawing on the authority of representative curators and artists, as outlined in chapter three. The existing literature the lacked the observation and insight of art representatives and the emphasis on historical and environmental perspectives had resulted in analyses that were not fully representative. From a methodological perspective, the field observation and in-depth interviews conducted in this research, enabled transparency in the explanation of variables from the practitioners' point of view. This technique revealed

undiscovered influential drivers along with innovative design approach. In this sense, the development of this framework has established a model that may be used as the basis of future academic study.

In addition to the aforementioned findings, chapter seven highlights existing innovative approaches and reinterpretations of traditional paper cutting through a review of measures employed in different countries and by design professionals. This expands and broadens the study to consider the development of paper cutting as a traditional cultural art beyond China. The investigation focuses on the reinterpretation of the traditional form by modern artists and suggests methods relevant to practitioners. The reference to the historical development of paper cutting art by western countries challenges implies a discrete and consistent development of the art form lending itself as an obvious avenue for further research.

### **8.3 Implications for theory**

This thesis advances the existing classification systems for Chinese paper cutting and examines explanations for variables in paper cutting styles and the more recent innovative approaches in design. In the following section, theoretical implications relating to the classification and framework presented. Explanations for the variables in styles and scope of the study of paper cutting art will also be addressed.

The concept that a geographical region develops only one style would be considered oversimplification. Also, the number of classification methods based on single criterion implies an insufficient investigation and generalised system (chapter four). The outcome of this research provides graphic examples within the classification system, indicating the importance of visual analysis while forming a valuable educational instrument. The new system, based four categories enables educators to answer questions such as: how many styles have been cultivated in a certain region? What is the aesthetic difference between styles? What factors determine these differences? Has the art been continuously developed in certain

region? The resultant system of classification proposed within this thesis advances existing theory and has the potential to be applied for educational purposes.

Another key contribution of this research lies in establishing the typology and theoretical framework of the development of paper cutting art (Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1). The emergence of in-depth of explanations for variation in regional styles has indicated influential factors ranging from the internal to the external. Therefore the findings of this research suggest the influence on regional styles and their development is more complex than the straightforward relationships proposed in the literature (chapters two, four and five). For instance, the driver environment consisted of weather, accessibility and local resource; the socio cultural driver involved associations with ethnic group and festival. The typology presented in Table 6.1 addresses the relationships between the driver, the action and the outcome, providing a clearer understanding of the development of the art.

Moreover, the theoretical framework presented in Figure 6.1 illustrated connections between influential drivers, the action, and the outcome, indicated the complexity of the development and a number of innovative approaches. For instance, to achieve innovation, measures such as combining concepts and changing end use are mentioned. To practice the idea of preservation, depicting traditional patterns and working with different media are regarded as feasible methods. This insight is in keeping with the research into regional styles (chapter two, four and five) and also highlights the significant role that imitation plays in the encouragement, preservation and innovation.

When examining the stylistic evolution of paper cutting, the research area needs to be expanded beyond the scope of this thesis in order to obtain a modern reinterpretation. Chapter eight provides two elements that complement the literature (chapter two and four). First, that consideration of paper cutting art as being synonymous with Chinese culture alone would be an oversimplification. In this sense, the concept of the development of the art limited to China

is reviewed alongside the standpoint that the art was cultivated distinctively beyond China. The results supplement this study and provide invaluable examples for practitioners of methods to aid early intervention and implementation. The application of paper cutting art to modern product design is also discussed and cases are presented ranging from contemporary works to commercial products. These cases demonstrate the potential for modern design and approaches to renew traditional art. In addition to the beauty of the form traditional form, the cultural significance of Chinese paper cutting symbols continues to contribute to the market appeal. This signifies the practitioner's need for a comprehensive of the design concept rather than the imitation of superficial style of paper cutting alone.

The influential drivers for variations of Chinese paper cutting style are complex and influenced by internal (environment, socio cultural custom, artistic community) and external (market forces) forces. The theoretical framework distills the complex inter-relationships between the drivers, actions and the outcomes in order to provide a mechanism for clarifying and classifying the diverse paper cutting styles evident in China. Also, the subdivisions of each sector suggest pragmatic methods for innovation, adding to the existing literature that focuses on the analysis of distinct art features. This study therefore discusses practical perspectives relevant for the purpose of innovating the traditional art.

As presented in Figure 6.1, the drivers and action noted in the theoretical framework, result in outcomes that are categorised as preservation, imitation and innovation. Preservation has been shown to be primarily driven by the environment driver as a result of inaccessibility. The most representative example is that of Shaanxi style, in the central area of China, which exhibits a large number of traditional patterns. Imitation is driven for the most part by artistic community and market forces, and results in two outcomes determined by differences in intention. The innovative outcome of imitation (new design), is dependant on the intention of deriving an original design, whereas the negative outcome (the same design), is due to lack of inspiration, creativity and the convenience of an existing market appeal. Similarly, the

internal and external drivers of the artistic community and market forces largely drive innovation. Through reference to artists' work, combining concepts into new form is used with the purpose of generating new styles. Competition in the market place is a key motivation that facilitates innovation in paper cutting styles.

#### **8.4 Limitations of the research**

This study presents one of the first steps in addressing the influential drivers for variations of paper cutting style in a multidimensional capacity. There appear several limitations to the research method, such as sampling and interview method, which are presented in the following sections.

Two limitations emerged as a result of the research model adopted and the methodology employed. First, from a methodological perspective, this research may have benefited from employing qualitative methodologies for sampling. For instance, a holistic classification system was conducted by generating measures proposed in previous studies, specialist museums and government award lists. However, examples falling outside these three areas are neglected. Nevertheless, the method adopted has achieved the maximum variation acknowledged by regarded authorities (national museums and government schemes). Therefore the approach can be considered appropriate given the limited duration of this study. Further studies should undertake additional sampling considerations in order to increase the generalisability of the research.

Secondly, while gathering empirical data, the accessibility of targeted interviewees became a further limitation. An example of this issue was access to the Guangling paper cutting museum, considered a pioneer in the field comprising museum, a research centre and a working studio. As a result of travel restrictions the desired information was obtained from official webpages and publications rather than telephone or email interview or questionnaires. These methods of gathering data was precluded due to Chinese cultural etiquette and interviews could only be conducted in person. Although several limitations indicate potential

bias, these should not detract from the significance of the findings but suggest a further stage of future research.

### **8.5 Avenues of further research**

An initial investigation of paper cutting art in countries beyond China has indicated the occurrence of diversified styles. In this regard, consideration of the relationship between the origin and the other influences on paper cutting styles could provide a fruitful avenue for research. From the author's perspective, an interesting avenue would explore how Chinese traditional symbols remain consistent with their style of origin, including any similarities in styles between countries, and possible explanations for this phenomenon. In order to develop this research, future studies may perhaps begin with a literature survey to uncover similar subjects and search for the explanation through interviews with representative authorities, followed by analysis of transcript and visual works to further understanding. As a validated measure of generating archival and empirical data has been developed within this research, such work can potentially proceed. The outcome of such a future study would provide an alternative means of understanding and comparing the differences between artistic styles.

In addition further study of the practical application of the art may be given added consideration. While examining the application of paper cutting art in product design, examples showed dynamic types of transformation. In this sense, the author foresees a conceptual framework correlated to methods of renewing traditional art that could provide a considerable reference for practitioners seeking ideas for innovation. The questions here may comprise to what extent designers derive ideas from traditional art, whether the traditional concept (form, symbol, technique) remain continuous, and the explanation for any variations. To answer those questions, a future study could commence with a sampling strategy to find designs correlated with the art and search for explanations through interviews and analysis of empirical information. A resultant, more instrumental framework could provide practical suggestions for related industry.

## **8.6 Summary**

This chapter has outlined the general conclusions of the research study and has reflected on the contributions, limitations and implications of the investigation and case studies. The overall purpose of this chapter was to conclude the findings to the research questions: what styles of paper cutting art typify the regions in China and, what explains the variation in paper cutting styles. The thesis has provided an analytical understanding of the explanation for variation of Chinese paper cutting art, developed a classification system to improve those currently in use within museums and by representative bodies, and established a theoretical framework for the explanation for changes in paper cutting design. The thesis has therefore met its exploratory objective of identifying previously unexplored relationships among variables and influential drivers related to regional paper cutting styles; paved the way for further research to refine the constructs; and measures of the theoretical framework and further investigate the development of paper cutting styles in different countries and design genres.

In study of drivers for variation of regional paper cutting styles, this research contributes to both theory and practice. The findings identify that market forces (external driver, relates to customer preference) and the threat of imitation are considerable influences on the variation of regional styles, which supplements existing theory. Additionally, the multi-dimensional analysis of the differentiation of styles between the north and the south of China has elucidated the contribution of the thesis to theory. When examining the development of paper cutting art in different countries, findings considered dynamic measures of the degree of preservation and innovation, together with applications found in product design. This implementation has the potential to be formalised as innovative an instrument.

This chapter has reviewed the conceptual framework and the associated approach of this research alongside consideration of as the contributions and limitations of the study. The contribution of this research is the concise analysis of the development of paper cutting art in China, the development of a holistic classification system, and a theoretical framework for the



explanation of variations in regional styles. Practical suggestions are also presented for renewing a traditional art form. In respect of future research, this chapter has outlined the potential follow-on areas presented by this study, pointing to key questions that may form the basis of further academic study. Finally, the chapter concludes by articulating directions for further research that contribute to both theoretical and practical branches of study.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A	Interview question
Appendix B	Interview transcript
Appendix C	Table 4.5 Visual analysis of regional styles
Appendix D	Table 7.1 The development of paper cutting art besides China

Type of interviewee	Interview Questions
Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you become involved with paper cutting art?</li> <li>• What kind of cutting tools do you use?</li> <li>• Are there any influential factors (e.g. artists or life experience) that affect your design?</li> <li>• What do you consider your signature design?</li> <li>• What do you consider your most innovative design?</li> <li>• How do you obtain your inspiration?</li> <li>• What do you consider to be your future prospects in paper cutting?</li> </ul>
Culture minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your opinion of the variables of paper cutting styles in China?</li> </ul>
Curator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What process do you use to collect art works?</li> <li>• How do you determine the criteria of classifying regional styles?</li> <li>• How to determine the representative works for styles?</li> <li>• How to restore and display paper cutting works?</li> <li>• What is the demographic of your visitors?</li> <li>• Are there any interactive activities in the museum?</li> </ul>
Shop owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the iconic features of local area?</li> <li>• What is your opinion of current development of paper cutting art?</li> <li>• How do you describe the paper cutting style of this region?</li> <li>• What is the most popular product in your shop?</li> <li>• What is the demographic of your customers?</li> <li>• What is your marketing strategy?</li> </ul>



**Huang:** How do you become involved in paper cutting art?

**Lu:** I learnt the art as a teenager from my aunt, Cho Re, Cheng. She is a famous paper cutting artist in this area. Initially I can not figure out why artists would invest such effort in the art because it is time consuming and hard labour. But gradually, I became one of them. I often do the art all day. I am really fascinated by this art form.

**Huang:** What is your usual working time?

**Lu:** I usually create paper cuttings in the evening, after teaching at the elementary school.

**Huang:** What is your process of making the art?

**Lu:** I sketch first. Occasionally I create cuttings without drawing outlines in advance.

**Huang:** What do you consider your signature design?

**Lu:** Auspicious patterns such as botany and birds, which are mainly adapted in response to customers' requests. It is meaningless to create works that do not sell. In order to challenge my own abilities and encapsulate different consumer requirements, I have been experience of both traditional and modern topics.

Huang: What do you consider your most innovative design?

Lu: 'Pai cutting', the iconic cutting technique in this region, is employed commonly on the flower, fish and animal feather and is accomplished by scissors. It has been passed down from former creators. Also, 'Leaf pattern' is another auspicious symbol for subject like pottery. Single colour is regarded main feature in this area. We do not follow up other colouring techniques like Yu County where it is renowned for its radiant dying effect. We keep our own tradition and inheriting our predecessor's distinct creations seems more appropriate. In addition, thick fabric paper is primarily used to achieve better performance. The pattern of 'Sharp teeth' is manifested in Northern area. The large scale of works produced in Jiangsu is not to my preference. It resembles Chinese paintings and is not easy to frame. Also, realism is not my cup of tea. I am interested in renewing traditional patterns. I transform old symbols into endearing imagery to decrease the mystery of traditional culture. I hope young people will think this traditional art interesting. In addition, making Chinese words like graphs is another interesting avenue. I also combine paper cutting imagery with daily articles like clocks. This product is popular with customers because it has a useful function.

Huang: What kind of cutting tools do you use?

Shu Ron Lu: Scissors are mainly used in addition to a cutting knife. You can buy tools in every grocery store. I believe that paper cutting art is a folk art thus tools should be easy accessible. I know that in Yueching special cutting tools are required in order to manifest delicate style.

Huang: Are there any influential factors affect your design?

Lu: In order to trigger students' interests, I provide them graphs of cartoon characters to begin with. I am interested in making traditional graphs into endearing imagery. I think teaching inspires me in aspects of my own creations. Winning competitions is a small step. It is more important and valuable to be accepted by the mass audience. To deal with imitation, my measure is to make my designs difficult to copy and follow. I tend to blend different styles. I apply graphs on clock designs that involve more than just cutting and I have made a good profit on these as they are rare. Also, I sell limited edition complicated works only in my studio shop and promote common works on the online shop.

Huang: How do you obtain your inspiration?

Lu: I learn a lot from my aunt, she brought me into this field. Many concepts come from life experience. I gather ideas from traditional graphs and daily life. I join local and national paper cutting associations and have constant contact with artists from other regions. We have regular meetings to share recent creations. Also, I receive annual books of winning works after the competitions. I gain ideas from other regions through reference to these publications.

Huang: What do you consider to be your future prospects in paper cutting?




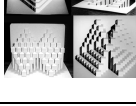
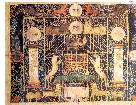











Lu: I hope my daughter will learn the skill. At the moment I teach the art in a local elementary school. It is considered a recreational activity so the class is selective, not compulsory. Studying the art is good for training aesthetic apprehension as well as patience. Boys are also interested in the art. I also give lessons in a senior high school. Lectures start with an introduction to the art, including origins, different styles, and representatives of local area, followed by improvised demonstration. After a period of basic training in the process students are allowed to start developing original creations. I give homework to students in order to help students gain experience and confidence. Encouraging them to participate national competitions is the strategy. I collect students' works to record their experiences and process and maybe in order to hold future exhibitions.



Table 4-5 Visual analysis of regional styles																																													
River	Province	Style	Origin	Imagery	Producer	Men	Children	Colour Singular	Mixed (paint)	Mixed (Collage)	Dying (Gradient)	Shape Circle	Oval	Polygon	Rectangle	Square	Triangle	Animal	Botany	Container (Bowl/Vase)	Fan	Human figure	Chinese words	Content Animal	Botany	Container (Bowl/Vase)	God	Natural scenery	Life scene	Legendary figure	Legendary story	Social incident	Opera character	Chinese word	Distinguish feature	Material Paper	Others	Cutting tool Scissor	Carving knife	Chisel	Others	Popularity			
Yellow River	Heilongjiang	Fangzheng	C.E.1662-1840 (Qing Dynasty)		✓			Red/White /Black				✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	A mixture of nationalities	Coloured paper		✓	✓			15,000/220,000/2010)			
		Hailun	C.E.1899		✓			Red/White		✓			✓			✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•Man Nationality Exaggerated and cartooned •Magnificent and crowded scene	Coloured paper		✓	✓			1,300/830,000/2006)		
	Jilin	Dongliao (Changbai Mountain)	C.E.9 Century		✓			Red					✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓													✓	✓	•Man Nationality •Traditional symbols •Female figure	Coloured paper							200/400,000 (2010) Annual income: £ 2000	
	Liaoning	Yiwulu Mountain	B.C.202		✓			Red/Black					✓			✓			✓					✓	✓											Special patterns from Man Nationality	Coloured paper		✓	✓			10,000/2012 ) Annual income£ 25,000		
	Inner ..	Heilinger	B.C. 386-557		✓			Red/Black					✓			✓	✓					✓													✓	Divide into north(nomadic) and south(farming) styles according to subjects	Coloured paper		✓	✓			5,000/187,000 (2012)		
Hebei	Fengting	C.E.1654-1722		✓				Red/White				Red/Green/ Yellow/Blue	✓		✓				✓	✓					✓	✓									✓	✓	Man Nationality	White cotton paper							1,000/407,000/1993)
	Yu County	C.E.1368-1662		✓	✓			Red/White				Red /Yellow/ Blue/Green/ Navy blue/Pink/ Purple	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								•Colouring technique •Opera character •Commercialised	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper		✓	✓			50,000/480,000/2012)		
	Gansu	Qingyang	B.C. 3 Century		✓			Red/Green					✓				✓		✓	✓																Ancient patterns/human face with animal body)	Coloured paper		✓	✓			12,000/2610 ,000/2005)		
	Xinjiang	Hami	B.C.202		✓			Red/White					✓						✓	✓																Minority Nationalities's folk habit and life style	Coloured paper	•Gold foil • Fabric • Leather			✓			2,000/472,000/2010)	
	Shandong	Binzhou	C.E.1420		✓			Red					✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓														✓	•Traditional symbols •Bold and simplified imagery	Coloured paper		✓						
Shandong	Chiping	C.E.420-589		✓				Red				✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓															Contains two style: thin line style and bold paper style	Coloured paper								
	Ju County	C.E. 1368 (Ming Dynasty)		✓				Red/Green/ yellow /pink/ purple/blue			✓					✓					✓	✓														Door label	Coloured paper						✓		
	Kaomi	B.C.202		✓				Red					✓				✓		✓	✓																•Symbolism Sense of movement	Coloured paper				Coloured paper				68,000/860,000/2012)
	Yantai	C.E.1351-1376		✓				Red			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓															•Painted with ink	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper							10,000/4960 ,000/2010)	
	Shanxi	Changyang	B.C.202		✓			Red				✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓																						1001389,000/2011)		
Henan	Guanling	B.C.202		✓	✓			Red				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓															•Chinese opera figures •Colouring skills	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper •Glossy		✓	✓					2,500/180,000/2009)
	Hui County	B.C.403-221		✓				Red/Black				✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓															Traditional patterns are transferred to soft paper imagery	Coloured paper		✓						
	Lingbao	B.C.256		✓				Red/Black				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓																Sharp teeth/Moon teeth	White cotton paper		✓	✓				Tearing	
	Lu City	B.C.772-476		✓				Red/Black/ White		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓																			✓						
	Shanxi	Ansai	20 Century		✓			Red				✓				✓	✓		✓	✓																	•Traditional pattern •Symbolism	Coloured paper		✓					15,000/1644 ,000/2007)
Ningxia	Haiyuan	A thousand year		✓				Red		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓															•Wall flower/ Hui Nationality •Islam culture	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper		✓						90,000/4550 ,000/2010/6 840000RMB
	Changjiang River	Jingtun	C.E.581-763		✓	✓		Red		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓																•Door label•Lantern design• Life scenery	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper		✓	✓					Tearing
	Nanjing	C.E.1368 (Ming Dynasty)		✓	✓			Red		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓															Doshun flower	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper	Gold foil	✓	✓					
	Xuzhou	B.C.202		✓				Red/Black					✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓															•Aboriginal •Leave a blank	Coloured paper		✓	✓					10,000/5580 ,000/2010)
	Yangzhou	C.E.755-763 (Dong Dynasty)		✓	✓			Red/White		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓															•Thin lines •Commercialised	•White cotton paper •Coloured paper		✓	✓					1,000/446,000/2011)
Shanghai	Fenglin				✓	✓		Red																																					



Table 7.1 The development of paper cutting art besides China

Culture	Name	Imagery	Origin	Symbolism/content	Style	Hue	Tools/Materials	Usage	Development	Theory
Japanese	Monkri/Kirigami	<p>Monkiri</p>  <p>Kirigami</p>   	<p>794-1185</p> <p>Family crest (dyed/embroidered on robes for formal and state occasions)</p> <p>Powerful family or main household, warriors</p>	<p>Natural objects (lotus, plum, cherry blossoms, bellflowers)</p>	<p>Symmetric</p> <p>Dimensional (pop-up cards)</p> <p>Simple patterns to complex designs</p>	Various colours	<p>Solid paper</p> <p>Craft knife</p> <p>Pencil</p> <p>Scissors</p>	<p>Family activities</p> <p>Gift design</p>	<p>Individual artists performance</p> <p>A lesson in elementary school</p> <p>Commercialised</p>	Christensen, J. A., CUT-ART-An Introduction to Chung-hua and Kiri-e
Jewish	Scherenschnitte	<p>MIZARACH/SHIVITI</p>  <p>SHEVUOS'LECH/ROISELECH</p>  <p>TORAH'S FLAGS</p> 	<p>Traced to 14th Century and known in 17 century in German</p> <p>Religious use</p> <p>Amulet</p>	<p>Emblems (menorah, crown, tablets of the law, Magen david, endless knot)</p> <p>Architectural elements and furnishings (columns, arched gateway, lamps, oil pitchers, musical instruments)</p> <p>- animals</p> <p>- vegetal motifs</p> <p>- human forms</p> <p>- secular scenes</p> <p>- odds &amp; ends (ribbons, banners, medallions, buildings)</p>	<p>Symmetric</p> <p>Inscription in composition</p> <p>Styles vary according to different nations</p> <p>MIZARACH (home)/SHIVITI (church)</p> <p>SHEVUOS'LECH (rectangular)/ROISELECH (round)</p> <p>TORAH'S FLAGS</p>	Various according to different nations	<p>Paper</p> <p>Wooden board</p> <p>Sharp knife</p>	<p>Religious use</p> <p>Decoration</p> <p>Celebration</p> <p>Amulet</p>	<p>Disappeared because of extermination of Jews</p> <p>Renewed by Israel and American</p>	<p>Frankel, G., THE ART OF THE JEWISH PAPER CUT</p> <p>Shadur, J. &amp; Y., Traditional Jewish Papercuts: An Inner World of Art and Symbol</p>
Mexican	Papel picado	 	<p>16th Century</p> <p>Religious ceremonies to present spirits</p> <p>Women made the art</p>	<p>Derived from Chinese embroideries (flowers, animals, lettering)</p> <p>People</p> <p>Skeleton</p>	<p>Banners</p> <p>Festive</p> <p>Humorous</p>	Various colours are used depending on different occasions	<p>Use 40-55 tissue paper</p> <p>Plastic sheets</p> <p>Hammers</p> <p>Chisels</p>	<p>Hung in church plazas and streets</p> <p>Celebrations (weddings, funerals, national holidays)</p>	<p>Competitions are held to produce fine works</p> <p>Celebrations</p> <p>Artists do customize paper cutting portrait Souvenir</p>	Sayer, C., ARTS AND CRAFTS OF MEXICO
German	Scherenschnitte		<p>17th Century</p> <p>Record loved ones' figures before camera is invented</p> <p>A skill for man to earn money</p>	Nature scenery	<p>Silhouette</p> <p>Symmetric</p>	Black and white	<p>Long-fibred paper</p> <p>Craft knife</p> <p>Pencil</p> <p>Scissors</p>	<p>Decorating eggs</p> <p>Gift</p> <p>Cards</p>	<p>Individual artists performance</p> <p>Some artists combine it with Kirigami</p> <p>Commercialised</p>	<p>Geiser, S. S., Traditional Papercutting-THE ART OF SCHERENSCHNITTE</p> <p>Christensen, J. A., CUT-ART-An Introduction to Chung-hua and Kiri-e</p>
Dutch	Knippen		<p>17th Century</p> <p>Educated class women play as a hobby</p> <p>Collective artworks</p>	Nature scenery	<p>Silhouette</p> <p>Symmetric</p>	White	<p>Paper</p> <p>Scissors</p>	<p>Gifts</p> <p>Wall decorations</p>		Geiser, S. S., Traditional Papercutting-THE ART OF SCHERENSCHNITTE
French	Silhouette		<p>18th century</p> <p>Educated class women play as a hobby</p> <p>Collective artworks</p>	People	Silhouette	Black and white	<p>Paper</p> <p>Scissors</p>	Portrait		
Polish	Wycinanki	<p>Kurpie</p>  <p>Lowicz - Kodry</p>  <p>- Gwiozdy</p>  <p>- Tasiemki</p> 	<p>19th century</p> <p>Peasant cottages</p>	<p>Kurpie</p> <p>- flowers</p> <p>- trees</p> <p>- animals</p> <p>Lowicz</p> <p>- village activities</p>	<p>Kurpie (basic)</p> <p>- symmetric</p> <p>Lowicz(well-preserved tradition)</p> <p>-round</p> <p>-vertical</p> <p>-rectangular</p>	<p>Kurpie (single colour)</p> <p>Lowicz (multi-colours)</p>	<p>Scissors</p> <p>Glue</p> <p>Solid coloured paper/rough sheep shears</p>	<p>Decoration (paste on ceiling beams, walls, furniture, windows, eggs)</p> <p>Celebration</p>	<p>Patterns are implemented on custom and product design</p>	Jablonski, R., Folk Art Designs-from Polish Wycinanki and Swiss and German Scherenschnitte



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